

BUILDERS
OF
MODERN
INDIA

HAKIM
AJMAL KHAN

ZAFAR AHMAD NIZAMI



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PUBLICATIONS DIVISION
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

December 1988 (Pausa 1910)

(C) Publications Division

Price : Rs. 30.00



**PUBLISHED BY THE DIRECTOR PUBLICATIONS DIVISION
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
PATIALA HOUSE NEW DELHI-110 001**

Sales Emporia ● Publications Division

SUPER BAZAR CONNAUGHT CIRCUS NEW DELHI 110001

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PRESS ROAD TRIVANDRUM 695001


10-B STATION ROAD LUCKNOW 226001

STATE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM BUILDING PUBLIC GARDEN HYDERABAD 500004

Printed at Indraprastha Press (CBT), Nehru House, New Delhi-110002

To the memory of my wife

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About the Series

The object of the series is the publication of biographies of those eminent sons and daughters of India who have been mainly instrumental in our national renaissance and the struggle for independence.

It is essential for the present and coming generations to know something about these men and women. Except in a few cases, no authoritative biographies are available. The series has been planned to remove this lacuna and comprise handy volumes containing simple and short biographies of our eminent leaders written by competent persons who know their subject well. The books in this series are of 200 to 300 pages each and are not intended either to be comprehensive studies or to replace more elaborate biographies. Though desirable, it may not be possible to publish the biographies in chronological order. The work of writing these lives has to be entrusted to persons who are well equipped to do so and therefore, for practical reasons, it is possible that there might be no historical sequences observed. It is hoped, however, that within a short period all eminent national personalities will figure in this series.

Shri R.R. Diwakar is the General Editor of this series.

Preface

Masihul Mulk Hakim Mohammed Ajmal Khan was a man of multi-dimensional personality. His whole life was a saga of selfless service and sacrifice. Initiating his career as a Unani physician, he ultimately threw himself into the maelstrom of national politics under the inspiring leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. His life, in fact, embodies a transcendental idealism.

An eminent physician, he practised not so much for the lucre as for the love of the poor. He promoted with a missionary zeal the indigenous system of medicine. He founded the prestigious Tibbia College as well as the Hindustani Dawa-khana in Delhi. His untiring efforts in the field of medicine infused a new vigour and life into an otherwise decaying Indian medical system under the British regime. The growth of the Indian medical profession owes a great deal to this great crusader of humanity in the sub-continent. His chief contribution in this field was that he revolutionised the indigenous medical system by importing a scientific basis on which the present Unani system now firmly rests. What Sir Syed Ahmad Khan did in the field of education, Hakim Ajmal Khan has truly done the same in the field of medicine.

Starting his early political career as one of the founders of the All India Muslim League, he attempted to mould it as a nationalist organisation. In the second decade of the 20th century he came to associate himself with the Indian National Congress and his enthusiastic zeal for the national cause made a profound impression upon Mahatma Gandhi with whom he forged a life-long friendship. He had the credit of adorning the presidential office of the All India Muslim League, the

Indian National Congress and the All India Khilafat Committee. He was also the first ever Muslim Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha. Perhaps, very few of us know that he was also responsible for initiating and inaugurating the non-cooperation movement against the British in 1920. He was a man of catholic outlook and an indomitable spirit. He had the courage of conviction and expressed his honest views on all issues of national importance without fear or favour. He was a great champion of Hindu-Muslim unity. In Mahatma Gandhi's memorable words : "Hindu-Muslim unity was the breath of his nostrils."

Hakim Saheb rendered a unique and unforgettable service in the field of education also. The Jamia Millia Islamia owes its existence to his relentless efforts in this direction.

The great historical city of Delhi had a special fascination for him and the boundless love of the people of Delhi for him elicited from Lord Hardinge the remark that he was the "uncrowned king of Delhi." His residence known as *Sharif Manzil* in Ballimaran was the hub of all national political activities. He was a man of great vision and sagacity. He evinced a deep understanding of international issues as well, chiefly of West Asia. His dynamic personality made a great impact on all those who came in his contact.

This is indeed one of the ironies of history that not much has been written on the activities of this great son of the soil. Moreover, in popular imagination he seems to survive only as an eminent Indian physician and many facets of his public life as particularly his inestimable contribution to the Indian national struggle remains obscure. The present work is but a modest, though serious attempt to highlight his services in the field of politics, education and philanthropy. The life and acti-

vities of Hakim Ajmal Khan have been recorded and reconstructed by drawing largely on such source material and authentic accounts as have not found sufficient exposure in many other books written on him. The writer hopes that the present study on Hakim Saheb's life and contribution will serve a useful purpose in strengthening the feelings of national integration as well as enlightening the general reader with some of the events which have remained unknown so far.

The stimulus to make a modest contribution to research writing came mainly from my brother Dr. F. A. Jeelani, Principal, Government Post Graduate College, Sehore (M.P.) and my teacher Professor L.C. Goswami, formerly Editor, Gazetteer, Ministry of Education and Culture, Government of India, New Delhi who went through the type-script of the book, though they are, of course, not responsible for any errors that remain. My gratitude to them is far beyond the reach of expression.

I owe much to the renowned Urdu litterateur Hakim Syed Ali Kausar Chandpuri and Professor Ali Ashraf, Vice-Chancellor, Jamia Millia Islamia for the constant encouragement they have given me.

The type-script and proofs were read by my daughter, Tabassum and son, Qamar to whom I am grateful for the pain they took first to produce a clean copy and then to see that the printer's devil is restricted to the minimum.

I shall be failing in my duty if I do not acknowledge my thanks to my colleague Shri M. M. Khan, Reader in Political Science, Prof. S. Ansari, Chief Librarian, Dr. Zakir Husain Library, Jamia Millia Islamia, Dr. Nafis Siddiqi, Principal, Bhagat Singh College, Delhi University, Mr. Afaq Ahmed Suharwardi, Mrs. Maimoona Sultan, Ex-M.P., Mrs. Salma

Sultan, Doordarshan, New Delhi, Khaldi Begum and to the librarians of Mahatma Gandhi Sangrahalaya, Sapru House Library, Tibbia College Library, Hamdard Institute of Islamic Studies, National Archives of India, Delhi State Archives, Central Secretariat Library, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi and Maulana Azad Library, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh for their kind co-operation.

October 2, 1988

ZAFAR AHMAD NIZAMI

Academic Staff College
Jamia Millia Islamia
New Delhi

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Lineage and Early Life

A SCION of a pre-eminent family of Unani physicians, Mohammed Ajmal was born in Delhi on 17 *Shawwal* 1284 A.H. (12 February, 1868)¹. His ancestry can be traced from the great saint, Nasiruddin Khwaja Ubaidullah Ahrar of Tashkand, whom the descendants of Taimur, particularly Babur's father Umar Sheikh Mirza held in high esteem. Besides his own piety Khwaja Ahrar commanded great respect due to his pedigree which was linked with the first two Caliphs of Islam. He was connected with the first Caliph Abu Bakr Siddiq from the father's side and the second Caliph, Umar Iban-al-Khattab from mother's side. In his *Memoirs* Babur says that his father was a disciple of Khwaja Ahrar who honoured him by visits and

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1. The biographers of Hakim Ajmal Khan unanimously agree on the 17th of *Shawwal* 1284 as the date of his birth by Hijri calendar. However, they differ from one another on a date by the Christian calendar. They generally mention 1863 (see Qazi Mohammad Abdul Ghaffar, *Hayat-i-Ajmal*, Aligarh, 1950, p. 30, *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. I, Calcutta, 1972, p. 34; Hakim Mohd Jamil Khan, *Seerat-i-Ajmal*, Delhi, nd. p. 7; Barbada D. Metcalf, Hakim Ajmal Khan, *Delhi Through Ages*, ed. R. E. Frykenberg, Delhi, 1986, p. 299) and 1864 (See Hakim Mohammad Hasan Qarshi, *Tazkirah-i-Masihul Mulk*, Lahore, 1928, p. 15; Hakim Mohd Abdur Razzack, *Unani System of Medicine in India*, Delhi, 1987, p. 5; Kausar Chandpuri, *Hakim Ajmal Khan*, Lucknow, 1973, p. 142; *The Information Sheet* dated 12 February 1987, brought out by the Department of Posts, Government of India, on the eve of the release of commemorative postal stamp of Hakim

(Continued on next page)

loved him so much that he called Umar Sheikh Mirza his son. In fact, it was Khwaja Ahrar who gave him the appellation of Zahiruddin Mohammad Babur. His name repeatedly figures in the *Memoirs* which refers to him as a renowned sage under whose protection "many poor and destitute persons lived free from the burden of dues and imposts."² Such was the influence of Khwaja Ahrar on Babur that, while besieging Samarkand in 906 A.H., he had a dream in which the saint appeared and predicted its fall soon, which then seemed improbable. The prophecy became a reality within a few days when Babur succeeded in occupying Samarkand.³ On another occasion Babur attributed his recovery from a serious illness to his translation of Khwaja Ahrar's *Risala Wiladiyya* in Turkish.⁴ Khwaja's tomb still exists in Tashkand where he breathed his last on 29 *Rabi-ul-Awwal*, 895 A.H. (20 February, 1490 A.D.) at the ripe old age of 89. The renowned Persian Poet Abdur Rahman

Ajmal Khan by the President Giani Zail Singh) mention the year of his birth by the Christian calendar. The present writer, however, favours and prefers 12 February 1868 as the exact date of Hakim Ajmal Khan's birth by adopting Amulya Chandra Bannerji's *Chronological Tables—1801-1924*, Calcutta, 1924; Abdul Quddus Hashmi's *Taqweem-i-Tarikhi*, Karachi, 1965, p. 321; and Abul Nasr Khalid's *Taqweem-i-Hijri-wa-Eeswi*, Delhi, 1939, p. 65. It is surprising to note the discrepancy and a long gap of four years which suggest that either the Hijri date was wrongly recorded or no serious attempt was ever made to convert it correctly into the christian date. But, as there was a general practice among the Muslims of those days, the events were recorded in the Hijri calendar only. Hence the date, as mentioned for Hakim Ajmal Khan's birth is obviously right and its equivalent 12 February 1868 may be considered as the exact date of his birth by the christian calendar.

2. *Babur Nama (Memoirs of Babur)*, Tr. by Annette Susannah Beveridge, Reprint Delhi, 1979, p. 41.

3. *ibid.*, p. 132.

4. *ibid.*, pp. 619-20.

Jami wrote an elegy on the death of the Khwaja. Later, Khwaja Ubaidullah Ahrar's sons who had settled in Samarkand accompanied Babur in his southward march towards India where he laid the foundation of the Mughal dynasty in 1526. Thus came Khwaja Ahrar's descendants to India where they made a notable contribution in the cultural, social and economic exchanges between India and the Central Asia.⁵

The family tree of Hakim Ajmal Khan includes the names of his ancestors in the following order.⁶

- 1) Nasiruddin Khwaja Ubaidullah Ahrar
- 2) Khwaja Abdullah Khwaja Kalan,
Khwaja-i-Khwajgan
- 3) Khwaja Muhammad Yusuf
- 4) Khwaja Muhammad Afzal
- 5) Mahdi Khwaja
- 6) Khwaja Muhammad Qasam
- 7) Mulla Ali Qari
- 8) Khwaja Muhammad Hasham
- 9) Khwaja Firoz
- 10) Khwaja Khurshid
- 11) Mulla Ali Dawood
- 12) Hakim Fazil Khan

5. Almost all the writers have mentioned Kashghar in the Central Asia as the place from where the ancestors of Hakim Ajmal Khan came to India. Rejecting their arguments Kausar Chandpuri has, however, rightly claimed Samarkand as the place where Khwaja Ubaidullah Ahrar lived and from where his descendants and Hakim Ajmal Khan's ancestors marched towards India in the company of Babur. See Kausar Chandpuri, *Hakim Ajmal Khan*, Lucknow, 1973, pp, 28-30.

6. *ibid*, pp 26-7 and p 82. This table places Hakim Ajmal Khan in the eighteenth generation of Khwaja Ubaidullah Ahrar. Kausar Chandpuri is, however, of the view that the list is incomplete and four more names belonging to four generations are missing from it.

- 13) Hakim Wasil Khan
- 14) Hakim Akmal Khan
- 15) Hakim Sharif Khan
- 16) Hakim Sadiq Ali Khan
- 17) Hakim Ghulam Mahmud Khan
- 18) Hakim Ajmal Khan

It was this distinguished family of the saints that produced a number of eminent physicians in later ages. Hakim Fazil Khan, who lived during the last days of the Mughal king Shahjahan, is said to be the foremost physician in the family with whom the art of medicine began to be practised as a profession. After him followed a long chain of highly skilled physicians under whose patronage the Unani system of medicine developed into a full fledged science. Two of them, namely, Hakim Akmal Khan and his brother, Hakim Ajmal Khan-I, were granted *Jagirs* and the *mansab* of 3000. Hakim Akmal Khan was also honoured with the title, *Akmal-ul-Muhaqqaqin-ul-Mulk*. The reputation of the family in the field of medicine reached its acme under Hakim Sharif Khan (1138 A.H. — 1222 A.H.), the son of Hakim Akmal Khan, and the Mughal emperor Shah Alam-II granted him *jagirs* in Panipat and Dasna in return for his services to the Mughal Court in Delhi and also conferred on him the title of *Ashraf-ul-Hukma*.⁷ He had, to his credit, a large number of treatises on medicine and several books on logic, hadith and history. He also translated the Holy *Quran* into the Persian and Urdu languages and dedicated his book, entitled *Tuhfa-e-Alam Shahi* or *Khawas-ul-Jawahar* to the ruling monarch Shah Alam-II⁸. He was considered an authority in medicine and was consulted by the physicians of his times. In his well-known book, *Aasar-us-Sanaa-*

7. *Ajmal Magazine*, Delhi, February, 1936, p. 40.

8. Kausar Chandpuri, *op. cit.*, pp. 114-8; Also Mohammad Kamal Husain Hamdani, *Matab-i-Masih*, Aligarh, 1976, pp. 11-3.

deed, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan waxes eloquent of Hakim Sharif Khan whom he compared to such ancient luminaries of the globe as Arastoo and Jalinoos.⁹ He constructed a mosque near his house in Ballimaran, which has the following verse inscribed on it :

“Thanks to the Almighty God that, with the efforts of Mohammed Sharif Khan, a mosque was erected which is Kaaba of purity . . . When the *Muezzin's* (one who calls the people to prayers by proclamation from a mosque) call arose, the preachers of wisdom said : ‘Seek the year of its foundation from the house of God.’ ”¹⁰

Last words of the couplet indicate 1206 A.H. as the date of the construction of the mosque. He died in 1231 A.H. at the age of 84 and was buried in Mehrauli. It was after the name Hakim Sharif Khan that the residence of the family came to be known as the *Sharif Manzil* which is to this day situated in Ballimaran, a well-known locality of Delhi and where Ajmal Khan was born. Hakim Sharif Khan had six sons of whom the fourth one—Hakim Sadiq Ali Khan succeeded him as a Hakim. Hakim Sadiq Ali Khan acquired all the qualities of his father and wrote several treatises on medicine which were later included in the syllabus of the Tibbia School. He was also a scholar of Persian and Arabic and died in 1264 A.H. at the age of 80.¹¹

Hakim Sadiq Ali was blessed with three sons—Hakim Ghu-

9. Syed Ahmad Khan, *Aasaar-us-Sanaadeed*, Reprint Delhi, 1965, p. 512; *Arastoo* is the Urdu-Persian name of Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) and *Jalinoos* that of Galen (129-190 A.D.).

10. The verse is inscribed on the inner wall of the mosque. Another inscription also mentions 1384 A.H. as the date for the reconstruction of the mosque and names it as the *Masjid-al-Hanafi-wal-Hukama*.

11. *Ajmal Magazine*, February, 1936 p. 41.

lam Mohammed Khan, Hakim Ghulam Mahmud Khan and Hakim Ghulam Murtaza Khan. The eldest son Hakim Ghulam Mohammed Khan joined the court of the Maharaja of Patiala as his personal physician and, in accordance with the tradition of his family wrote several books on a variety of subjects.¹² He died during the very life-time of his father. His son Ghulamullah Khan settled down in Patiala. His daughter was later married to Hakim Ajmal Khan. The third son of Hakim Sadiq Ali also remained associated with the Patiala Court and died in 1292 A.H. at the age of 54.¹³

Ajmal Khan's father and the grandson of Sharif Khan was Hakim Ghulam Mahmud Khan. He was the second son of Hakim Sadiq Ali. He was a renowned physician and had a roaring practice in Delhi and in other parts of North India. Patients flocked to him for treatment from different parts of India and other parts of the West Asian countries. Mahmud Khan was very hospitable and generous. Though patronised lavishly by the rulers of several princely states, he never neglected the poor. It goes to the credit of Hakim Mahmud Khan that he democratised the Unani system of medicine among the masses by taking it out of the patronage of the royal court. He severed his connections with the Red Fort of Delhi and practised medicine for the benefit of the poor whose houses he visited frequently to examine their patients from whom he neither charged any fees nor the cost of medicines.¹⁴

Hakim Mahmud Khan witnessed the horrors of the rebellion of 1857 and would have fallen a victim to the British reprisals but for the timely intervention of the rulers of Patiala, Nabha

12. Hakim Jamil Khan, *Sirat-i-Ajmal*, Delhi, nd, p. 5.

13. *ibid.*

14. Intezar Husain, *Gular ka Phool*, Savera, Lahore, May, 1976, pp. 272-3.

and Jind, whose regiments kept a round the clock vigil on his house during those traumatic days.

The great poet Ghalib, who was a neighbour of Hakim Mahmud Khan, has recorded unforgettable events in his diary entitled *Dastanbuy* which he maintained during the period of rebellion. Thus writes Ghalib :

“During all this turmoil something occurred which was of considerable help to us. The ruler of Patiala, Raja Narendra Singh... supports the conquerors in this battle; his army has been assisting the British from the very beginning. Some of the rajas’ highest officials live in this lane; Hakim Mahmud Khan, Hakim Murtaza Khan, Hakim Ghulamullah Khan—all of them progeny of Hakim Sharif Khan, who now dwells in paradise—are themselves very honourable and famous men. The double row of their extensive homes stretches for some distance and for the past ten years I have been the neighbour of one of these rich men, Hakim Mahmud Khan who, with his family and relatives, lives a very respectable life according to the traditions of his ancestors.”¹⁵

Hakim Mahmud Khan strove hard to protect the people by providing them shelter in his house, and kept their valuables in his safe custody, which were duly returned after the disturbance was over. Curiously enough, these sterling acts of honesty and kindness were considered as seditious by the British authorities who were hell bent upon crushing the soul of Indians. They took strong exception to these activities which ultimately led to his arrest. Ghalib graphically narrates this incident in the following words :

“Probably because of the spying of devilish informants,

15. Asadullah Khan Ghalib, *Dastanbuy*, Tr. by Khwaja Ahmad Faruqi, Delhi, 1957, p. 42. Also. Ralph Russell and Khurshidul Islam, *Ghalib, 1797-1869, Life and Letters*, London, 1969, Vol. I, p. 142.

the city administrators learned that the home of Raja Narendra Singh Bahadur's physicians had become the rendezvous and refuge of the Muslims. It would be no surprise if some of these troublesome, evil-tongued informers are here also. Because of them, on Tuesday, February second, the city administrator entered that house and took away with him sixty innocent refugees along with the master of the house. Although these people were held in confinement for several days and nights the dignity of their position was respected."¹⁶

Hakim Mahmud Khan was, however, released a few days later and most of those who were arrested along with him were also set free soon after. Hakim Mahmud Khan died in 1309 A.H. at the age of 72. The famous Urdu poet Khwaja Altaf Husain Hali composed an elegy on his demise, two stanzas of which are quoted below:¹⁷

The stream of learning glide along the scholars caused
And then away they passed.
Our Community's heralds the sleeping roused
And then away they passed.
Some warblers their magical numbers sang
And then away they passed.
Some saviours there were who resurrected the dead
And then away they passed.
The only plank which the shipwreck survived.
The tide of time, Oh Delhi! took that away, too.
Seemingly thou had left the glory of thy people, city divine.
And community's honour sullied since long;
Yet Mahmud Khan's presence lent honour to us all.
Alack the loss that Death at last,

16. *ibid*, pp. 58-9.

17. Khwaja Altaf Husain Hali, *Deewan-i-Hali*, Lahore, nd. P. 192.
(Translation by Dr. F. A. Jeelani).

Laid her icy hand on him too.

What moments wouldst thou cherish about the days past;

And what the source of thy pride to endure, Oh!

Jehanabad?

Hakim Mahmud Khan had three sons. The eldest son, Hakim Abdul Majeed Khan, continued the family traditions. He earned a name for his profound knowledge of medicine and for the founding of the Tibbia School for preparing a well-trained cadre of Unani physicians. The British Government conferred on him in 1898 the title of *Haziq-ul-Mulk* for promoting the cause of the Unani system of medicine in India. He also helped his father in pioneering the publication of an Urdu journal, the *Akmal-ul-Akhbar* and associated himself with the educational movement of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan.

After the death of Abdul Majeed Khan at the age of 53 in 1901, the mantle fell on his younger brother, Hakim Wasil Khan, who undertook the responsibility of manning the Tibbia School and devoted himself to the completion of the mission of his predecessor. But his untimely death in 1904, when he was only 43, left it to Hakim Mohammad Ajmal Khan, the third brother and the youngest son of Hakim Mahmud Khan to further the unfinished task of the family.

Ajmal Khan received his early education at home. Gifted with a prodigious memory, he could memorise extensive matter after only one reading. He committed to memory the entire Holy *Quran* within a short span of three years while he was only sixteen years old. This feat he accomplished under the guidance of Maulvi Daim Ali and Hakim Jamiluddin. He completed the *Dars-i-Nizamia* and the Islamic traditional learning at a comparatively young age. His academic accomplishments comprised knowledge of Persian, Arabic, Grammar, Logic, Physics, Literature, Astronomy, Mathematics and Philosophy over which he soon achieved mastery. He was indebted for the

knowledge of these subjects to eminent scholars like *Shamsul Ulama* Moulvi Abdul Haq Dehlvi, Pirji Siddiq Ahmed Dehlvi, Abdur Rasheed Rampuri and Mirza Ubaidullah Beg.¹⁸ He spoke both Persian and Arabic with effortless ease. He continued his study of Arabic literature during his stay at the Rampur Court under the guidance of Moulvi Tayyab, an eminent scholar of Arabic Literature. Since English was not popular among the Muslims of those days, Ajmal Khan also did not concentrate his mind to it. Yet, somehow he acquired a working knowledge of English too, at a later stage under the guidance of his regular tutor Colonel Z. Ahmed, before he left for Europe in 1911.

Further Ajmal Khan was an adept calligraphist, something unusual among the physicians known for their poor, slipshod and illegible hand writing. His superb hand written models in Persian received appreciation from the accomplished artists of his time. He learnt this art from Mohammed Amir Panjakash and Moulvi Raziuddin. Such was his interest in this art that he collected hundreds of precious samples of calligraphy from different parts of the world.

He was interested in physical culture also. With a view to keeping himself physically fit, he regularly attended *akharas*, under such wrestlers as Ustad Alf Khan and Khalifa Ismail and participated in wrestlings with Hakim Ahmed Saeed Khan, Wasil Khan and Hakim Nasir Khan. Later he played billiard also.

Ajmal Khan studied medicine under his father Hakim Mahmud Khan and Hakim Ghulam Raza Khan but the real expertise came from his brothers, Hakim Abdul Majeed Khan

18. Hakim Mohammad Hasan Qarshi, *Tazkirah-i-Masihul Mulk*, Lahore, 1928, p. 15.

and Hakim Wasil Khan. To them, he owed much in setting up a flourishing medical practice.

In 1884 Ajmal Khan was wedded to the daughter of Hakim Ghulamullah Khan and was blessed with two daughters and a son. His son Hakim Jamil Khan (b. 1898) not only continued the ancestral profession but also added lustre to it.

Like his illustrious predecessors, Hakim Mahmud Khan and Hakim Abdul Majeed Khan, Hakim Ajmal Khan not only maintained relations with the Rampur Court but was appointed a physician to Nawab Hamid Ali Khan of Rampur in 1892 and held this position for less than a decade. His stay in Rampur helped him to come in contact with many national leaders whom the Nawab gave money for diverse causes. He developed friendly relations with Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk who later succeeded Sir Syed Ahmad Khan as the Secretary of the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College, Aligarh. This prompted him to take interest in the affairs of the College for which he collected donations from many rulers. Later he became a trustee of the college in 1900, a position he held until the beginning of the Non-Cooperation Movement in 1920.

Hakim Ajmal Khan's stay in Rampur was helpful to him in another way. The Nawab had a rare library which contained more than 18,000 rare manuscripts and 13,000 books on varied subjects. Not only did he profit himself by it but also set it in order. After making a thorough survey, he resuscitated the manuscripts and books, classified them subjectwise, got them properly catalogued and a detailed list made out, something which none before him had ever cared to do. Hakim Saheb also wrote and prefixed a detailed introduction to the list of books prepared by him.¹⁹

19. Qazi Mohammad Abdul Ghaffar, *Hayat-i-Ajmal*, Aligarh, 1950, pp. 45-6.

In his introduction to the catalogue, Hakim Ajmal Khan lamented the lost glory of his community and called upon it to preserve the ancient values with care. Making his view-point clear, he wrote thus:

“The remains of the world civilization and progress are found in several forms. Sometimes an old city appears by chance. . . Similarly the writings of each *qaum* point the way to the thought of that *quam* for future generations. Although the sun of Eastern arts and sciences kept rising in its own time and many *qaums* drew benefits from its light, now that sun has declined and the age, as is its habit, has given birth to a new sun that fulfils the needs of the people of the age. . . The results of this research, which previous nations had already endured will happen to us; we will see our former greatness and glory in the hand of oblivion if we do not take thought to preserve it. . . ”²⁰

At Rampur, Hakim Saheb came in close contact with the rulers of the erstwhile princely states. Although a royal court is hardly a congenial ground for a man of spartan habits to flourish, but Hakim Saheb managed to overcome this irreconcilable situation. In fact, he eminently succeeded in reconciling “the standards of two radically different cultures, the aristocratic and the democratic”.²¹ Although he lived in the company of the Nawab and his entourage, he could not keep himself aloof from the common people at large. “As personal physician to the Nawab he was in a world of affluence”, comments Professor M. Mujeeb, “of indulgence, of scorn for the undistinguished multitude and subservience to the great. He had to consider himself completely at the Nawab’s disposal, and to show that he cherished the privilege of being in the Nawab’s company.

20. Hakim Jamil Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

21. M. Mujeeb, *The Indian Muslims*, London, 1967, pp. 533-4.

He could never let it appear that anything else in the world was important, when the Nawab did not think it to be so".²²

In spite of the fact that he 'passed his time among the potentates' he was a 'thorough-going democrat'. Hakim Saheb never neglected the poor and the weaker sections of society whom he treated sympathetically whenever they approached him. He had the courage of conviction and a deep sense of justice. He never let himself go with the whims of the rulers and the rich. Once, he even proceeded to Delhi to attend the wedding of the daughter of his late father's barber, leaving the ailing Nawab alone in Rampur. On another occasion, he succeeded in compelling the Nawab to offer a public apology for having beaten an officer of his court.

Following the death of his eldest brother, Abdul Majeed Khan in 1901, Hakim Saheb left Rampur after relinquishing the position of the *Afsar-ul-Atibba* and the personal physician of the Nawab. He was urgently needed in Delhi. However, he continued to be a regular visitor to Rampur whenever the Nawab wanted him to be there. All through his life he maintained normal and cordial relations with the Nawab who, too, held Hakim Saheb in high esteem. This is amply evident from the way, the Nawab sought his advice on important issues. In fact, the two lived like intimate friends. The Nawab never withheld any help to any institution which carried the recommendation of Hakim Saheb. Hakim Saheb, in turn, responded to the Nawab's call whenever his help was needed in any matter, medical or personal. Even politics, which in later times embraced Hakim Saheb as its own, could not terminate his bonds of friendship with the rulers of the erstwhile princely states, who often received reprimand for their association with the national

22. *ibid.*

leaders like Hakim Sahab, whom the Britishers considered as their arch-enemy.

Following the demise of his elder brother Hakim Wasil Khan, Hakim Ajmal Khan succeeded as the sole inheritor of the art of Unani *Tib* and established a flourishing medical practice in Delhi which earned him the eminence of the great medical luminary Avicenna.²³ His diagnosis was excellent, his prescriptions were superb. This was possible because he kept himself abreast of the latest developments that took place in the world of medicine. In fact 'his own medical reputation...exceeded that of any of his predecessors'.²⁴ His clinic was always crowded with patients whom he examined regardless of their rank, position, caste or creed. Giving his observations about Hakim Ajmal Khan's clinic, C.F. Andrews states that "he made no difference whatever between rich and poor, Hindu and Mussalman : all were treated alike and I noted specially the number of Hindu poor who received free treatment".²⁵ He never accepted any fees for examining the patients at his clinic but whenever called outside Delhi he charged one thousand rupees per day as his consultation fee. It was, therefore, only the erstwhile rulers or the rich class of Indian society that could afford his treatment outside Delhi but there too he did not charge any fee from the poor. In the later days, he practically gave away all that he earned either to the Tibbia College or to the Jamia Millia Islamia which were considered to be his two eyes.

Hakim Ajmal Khan was reasonably tall in height with pro-

23. Hakim Mohd. Abdur Razzack, *Hakim Ajmal Khan*, Delhi, 1987, p. 105.

24. C. F. Andrews, Hakim Ajmal Khan, *Eminent Mussalmans*, Madras, 1926, p. 293.

25. *ibid.*, pp. 290-92.

portionate physique and fair complexion. The black beard and moustache on his face increased his grace. Jawaharlal Nehru found him "steeped in the culture of imperial Delhi of Mughal days" who was "in his manners, a typical aristocrat of the older order, with princely looks and princely ways, and even his face bore a marked resemblance to the miniatures of the Mughal sovereigns".²⁶ He always wore a *sherwani* with the *churidars* and the fez cap. The fez was, however, replaced subsequently by the Gandhi cap which was generally known during those days as Ajmal cap. During his tours abroad, however, he put on the western clothes as well. Highly cultured and sophisticated, he was endowed with the noble qualities of head and heart—utmost tolerance, generosity of heart and the openness of mind. He was a quiet, humble, sober, religious, sincere man of high character.

Although the ancestors of Hakim Ajmal Khan possessed a literary taste but none of them was ever a creative artist. He was, however, a reputed poet of Urdu and Persian and composed poems under the pen name, *Shaida*. Perhaps, his relations with the Rampur court and the neighbourhood of the immortal Ghalib seem to have inspired him to take up verse-writing as a hobby and pastime. His verses were on traditional themes like love, wine and beauty which touch the very core of the human heart. At times he dealt with the contemporary socio-political subjects also. His Persian *ghazals* bear an imprint of Hafiz and Bedil whereas the Urdu poetry is influenced by Daagh and Hali. He never recited his verses in a *Mushaira* but confined it only to a limited circle of close friends which included such luminaries of the literary world as Nawab Shuja-uddin Khan "Taban", Abdur Rahman Khan 'Bayan', *Shifa-ul-Mulk* Hakim Raziuddin Ahmed Khan 'Razi', Nawab Sira-

26. Jawaharlal Nehru, *Autobiography*, Delhi, 1962, p. 168.

juddin Khan 'Saail', Nawab Mirza Ahmed Ali Khan 'Ali', Hakim Asad Ali Khan 'Muztar', Syed Akhlaq Husain 'Akhlaq' and Syed Ishtiaq Husain 'Shauq'. His collection of poems, *Diwan-i-Shaida*, was brought out in Berlin by Dr. Zakir Husain in 1926. It contained a foreword by Qazi Mohammad Abdul Ghaffar and was dedicated to Khwaja Abdul Majeed and the teaching community of the Jamia Millia Islamia. Later this collection was reprinted in Delhi.

Thus Hakim Ajmal Khan was a lovable personality who, besides being a physician of repute, became a popular leader of the masses. Rightly remarks Prof. Mujeeb that "he was extraordinary in many ways, but in every way the product of the finest Indian Muslim cultural traditions and ideals. He was loved and honoured, and most of all by those who themselves had high ideals of integrity and refinement."²⁷

27. M. Mujeeb, *op. cit.*, pp. 535-6.

The Messiah

PRIOR TO twentieth century there was no systematic arrangement for imparting Unani medical education in India. Usually the people desirous of learning this branch of knowledge had to sit at the feet of the learned and the experienced *Tabibs* of the day and in this way they qualified themselves for setting up a medical practice. Earlier, Hakim Ajmal Khan's predecessors too imparted instructions to the students of *Tib* in the same manner and produced many eminent Hakims in the country. Such a system had its inherent defects. This was realised by Hakim Mahmud Khan and his son Abdul Majeed Khan who attempted to systematise the prevailing practice of medical education. For this, Hakim Abdul Majeed Khan founded a *Madrasah Tibbia* in 1883 which was formally inaugurated in July 1889.¹ This institution aimed at reviving the Unani system of medicine, imparting free instructions in that system, doing away with the unqualified *Tabibs* and training every year an efficient staff of Unani physicians to provide medical aid to the people of the country.²

In fact Hakim Abdul Majeed Khan wanted to get the school

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1. Hakim Khwaja Rizwan Ahmed, *Hamiyaat-i-Qanoon*, Delhi, 1926, p. 18.
 2. See Hakim Ajmal Khan's Memorandum to the Governor of Bombay vide Appendix 'H' of the *Proceedings of the Bombay Legislative Council*, 1912, p. 242.

inaugurated either by Maulana Rashid Ahmed Gangohi or Maulana Fazlur Rahman Moradabadi,³ but neither of them was available. Ultimately he invited Mr. R. Clarke the Deputy Commissioner of Delhi to inaugurate the *Madrasah* on 23 July 1889. A large number of eminent Indians attended the function which among others included Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Maulvi Nazir Ahmed, Maulvi Zakaullah, Maulana Hali and Mohammed Husain Azad. Maulvi Nazir Ahmed, specially composed a poem to be read on this occasion.⁴ On the completion of the three year's course at the school the students were awarded formal degrees at a ceremony specially held for this purpose which later became a regular feature when Moulvi Nazir Ahmed used to recite his poems on the progress made by the institution. By the turn of the century 65 students had completed their studies and were awarded degrees by the school.⁵ Although the Tibbia School was meant for imparting instructions in Unani system of medicine, its farsighted founders made it obligatory for the pupils to take lessons in allopathy also. For this purpose the students were sent to different hospitals for practical training where they

3. Hakim Khwaja Rizwan Ahmed, *Hayat-i-Haziq-ul-Mulk Marhoom, Ajmal Magazine*, Delhi, February, 1936, p. 85. Maulana Rashid Ahmed Gangohi and Maulana Fazlur Rahman Moradabadi were highly respected spiritual leaders of the Indian Muslims. In fact Maulana Gangohi (1828-1905) was a co-founder of the *Darul Uloom*, Deoband and succeeded Maulana Mohd. Qasam Nanotvi as its rector. His anti-British feelings ran so high that he actively participated in the rebellion of 1857 and issued a *fatwa* (religious decree) in 1888 to forge Hindu-Muslim unity and communal harmony in the country.

4. *ibid.*, pp 85-6, Kausar Chandpuri, *Hakim Ajmal Khan*, Lucknow, 1973, pp. 130-1.

5. Qazi Mohammad Abdul Ghaffar, *Hayat-i-Ajmal*, Aligarh, 1950. p. 52.

received training in surgical skill besides attending lectures of eminent persons in the field.

After the establishment of Tibbia School, Hakim Ajmal Khan launched a movement for modernising the Unani system of medicine which, in his view, required radical reforms. When the Muhammedan Educational Conference met at Delhi in 1892, Hakim Ajmal Khan, as the Secretary of its Reception Committee, alongwith his eldest brother, Hakim Abdul Majeed Khan, called upon the patrons and practitioners of Unani System of Medicine to respond to the changing times by making necessary changes in this field. At this conference a suggestion was put forth to affiliate the Tibbia School to the Muhammedan Anglo-Oriental College of Aligarh but the members did not agree to it and so the proposal was dropped.⁶ In fact Hakim Ajmal Khan wanted to modernise the system along the lines of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan who had pioneered the cause of modern education for the Muslims in India. Hakim Saheb was whole-heartedly supported in this move by the rulers of the then princely states, particularly Nawab Hamid Ali Khan of Rampur at whose court he had stayed for about nine years as his personal physician.

Following the death of Hakim Abdul Majeed Khan on 11 July 1901 at the age of 53, the responsibility of running the Tibbia School fell on the shoulders of his brothers Hakim Wasil Khan and Hakim Ajmal Khan. They convened a grand meeting in August 1901 at the Town Hall, Delhi with Deputy Commissioner in the chair where Ajmal Khan made an appeal to the people to donate one lakh rupees for the school.⁷ The following year he started the publication of a monthly magazine the *Mujalla-i-Tibbia*, which contained news about

6. *ibid.*, p. 27.

7. *ibid.*, p. 52.

the Tibbia School and useful essays on the *Tib*.⁸ In order to safeguard the future of the school they established the Indian Medicines Company also the proceeds of which were to be spent on the needs of the institution.⁹ After the premature demise of his elder brother Hakim Wasil Khan, the Tibbia School became the sole responsibility of Hakim Ajmal Khan who liquidated the Indian Medicines Company by purchasing all its shares on behalf of the school and earmarked its income to meet the expenses of the Tibbia School. The Company was rechristianed as *Hindustani Dawakhana* which still exists in Ballimaran and is now being run by the Delhi Administration. In 1911 the School and the *Dawakhana* were placed under the control and management of a body, the Medical Association or the *Anjuman-i-Tibbia*, registered under Act XXI of 1860.¹⁰ Later the *Anjuman-i-Tibbia* was converted into a Board of Trustees.

In fact Hakim Ajmal Khan had a two-fold objective in view. First, he wanted to put the Tibbia School on a sound financial footing by elevating it to the status of a fullfledged college where all the facilities of modern scientific researches could be available. He wished to make it not only an educational institution but also a research centre furnished with the latest medical paraphernalia. Secondly, he wanted to launch a rigorous movement for modernising the indigenous Unani and Ayurvedic systems of medicine by bringing all the *Hakims* and *Vaids* on one and the same medical platform. In fact he wanted "to tie physicians together and to disseminate his arguments on the need to reform medicine; to know the classic books; to be open to new problems and solutions;

8. Hakim Mohd. Hasan Qarshi, *Tazkirah-i-Masihul Mulk*, Lahore, 1928, p. 22.

9. *Ajmal Magazine*, February, 1936, pp. 116-7.

10. *Proceedings of the Bombay Legislative Council*, 1912, p. 243.

to develop the indigenous pharmacopoeia, and to join with *vaid*s...in common concerns".¹¹ In his view the indigenous system of medicine was in a very deplorable condition. It had, according to him, lost its dignity as no physician had taken pains to systematise and rationalise it. The practising physicians remained rooted to the old traditional methods and did not care to keep themselves abreast of modern innovations in the field. They woefully lacked a scientific spirit and showed no zeal for modern research.¹² Thus with a view to bring the indigenous system of medicine out of this stagnation and give it the status as honourable as that acquired by the allopathic system, Hakim Ajmal Khan tried to harmonise the three systems — unani, ayurvedic and allopathic — by eliminating their deficiencies. In recognition of his unique services to the cause of Indian medicines the British Government honoured him by conferring the title of *Haziq-ul-Mulk* in January 1908.¹³ Such titles had been held by members of his family, earlier also. His great grand father Hakim Akmal Khan was given this title by the Mughal King whereas his own elder brother Hakim Abdul Majeed Khan had received this honour in 1898 by the British. He was, thus, the third recipient of this title which he later surrendered to the government in 1920 as a mark of protest against the British policy towards Turkey, and thus initiated the beginning of the Khilafat Movement.

Hakim Saheb always remained equally concerned with the problems of ladies who were the worst sufferers from malnutrition and insanitary conditions. To ameliorate their plight, he took many concrete and progressive steps in this direction.

11. Barbara D. Metcalf, Hakim Ajmal Khan, R. E. Frykenberg (ed.) *Delhi Through the Ages*, Delhi, 1986, p. 303.

12. Qazi Mohd. Abdul Ghaffar, *op. cit.*, pp. 86-7.

13. Hakim Mohd. Hasan Qarshi, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

He supplemented the Tibbia School by opening a Female Midwifery School and Hospital by getting it formally inaugurated by the wife of the Governor of Punjab, Lady Dane on 13 January, 1909.¹⁴ It was a radical step taken by Hakim Saheb towards the professional courses in the direction of female education. Expressing his views on this occasion he said :

“The thing to which we invite the female students and the knowledge that we wish to impart to them is entirely new and quite strange to the gentle races of our country. But no educational task could be considered as complete unless we have a genuine demand of sympathy for the ladies who constitute half of the part of society.”¹⁵

Side by side efforts were made to train well-qualified midwives to help Indian ladies in their hour of need. All these measures went a long way in providing medical assistance to women in times of distress since inexperienced quacks and illiterate mid-wives were mainly responsible for an alarming rate of mortality.

The year 1910 was a milestone in the medical profession of Hakim Ajmal Khan. Incensed by his efforts to popularise the Unani medicines, the Bombay Medical Association called upon the Government to legally prohibit all indigenous systems of medicine, which in its view, had hardly any validity. It also demanded compliance of strict standards before issuing permission to establish a clinic which was tantamount to a total ban on the practice of *Hakims* and *Vaids* in future.¹⁶ The Government, which had always nursed feelings of antipathy towards the Unani system vis-a-vis allopathy readily responded to this outrageous demand of the Bombay Medical

14. Hakim Rasheed Ahmed Khan, *Hayat-i-Ajmal*, Delhi, nd. pp. 71-4.

15. Qazi Mohd. Abdul Ghaffar, *op. cit.*, pp. 75-6.

16. Mohd. Hasan Qarshi, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-7.

Association and introduced a bill on 21 November, 1911 in the Bombay Legislative Council for the Registration of Medical Practitioners. According to the proposed Act, no *Hakim* or *Vaid* could be enlisted as a recognised physician except the one who had either received education in Europe or was a degree holder from a recognised university in India.¹⁷

The Bill aimed at creating a Medical Council to control the medical practitioners and was empowered to remove from its register the name of any physician who was guilty of any grave misconduct or unprofessional act. No unregistered physician was considered to be “legally” or “duly qualified medical practitioner” and was therefore, unqualified for the position of medical officer in any hospital or dispensary.¹⁸ In fact it sounded a death-knell of all the *Hakims* and *Vaids* who had been practising for ages and serving nearly eighty percent of India’s population. It shattered the hopes of many enterprising youngmen who wished to choose medical profession for their future career. Hakim Ajmal Khan reacted sharply to this move and declared a constitutional war against the Bombay Government by mobilising public opinion against the Bill. As a result of this, Indian members opposed the Bill tooth and nail in the Council and condemned the government for proceeding with such a move against the indigenous systems of medicine. Supporting the cause of Indian system one member ¹⁹ said thus :

“There are many standard works written by Indian gentlemen on Indian medicine and they are studied by native practitioners. Why should these books be cast aside in

17. *Bombay Legislative Council Proceedings*, 1911, Vol. XLIX, pp. 571-2.

18. *ibid.*, p. 573.

19. D. L. Belvi, *ibid.*, p. 583.

favour of the European system . . . I believe that the ultimate effect of this measure, if passed into law will be to drive out of existence the Indian system of medicine . . . considering the fact that there is a vast majority of people who prefer Indian to European medicine . . . ”²⁰

The members asked the Government as to “ . . . why similar efforts should not be made by (the) Government to promote the Indian System of Medicine? Why should there not be institutions for the proper training up of *vaid*s and *hakim*s? Why should there not be diplomas and degrees instituted in Indian medicine?”²¹

Another member²² declared it paradoxical that whereas on the one hand the Government of India was encouraging the development of the indigenous system of medicine on the other it was trying to wipe out the Indian physicians. He reminded the House that recently the Government of India had conferred the title of *Haziq-ul-Mulk* on an eminent physician of Delhi, meaning thereby Hakim Ajmal Khan. Lauding the services of the *Vaid*s and *Hakim*s he said that during the plague epidemics they had co-operated with the Government and in some cases their recommendations were accepted in toto by the provincial governments. Their services to the country at large could not be denied because of the fact that the *hakim*s were always preferred by the people to qualified allopathic medical men. He categorically made it clear that “. . . if this Bill becomes an Act, certainly it is a kind of thin end of the wedge to weed out the *vaid*s and *hakim*s”.²³ But the Government made it known to

20. *ibid.*

21. *ibid.*

22. Moulyi Rafiuddin Ahmed, *ibid.*, p. 585.

23. *ibid.*

the House that it was not impressed with the practice of the *vaid*s and *hakim*s".²⁴ However, the Governor of Bombay Sir George Sydenham Clarke suggested that if the *hakim*s wished "to be seriously considered, they should organise themselves, submit to some form of training and use some method of differentiating between those who are *hakim*s and those who are not."²⁵

Soon after the Bill was referred to a Select Committee for consideration, Hakim Ajmal Khan toured the country and lobbied extensively against the Bill. He asked the Unani *hakim*s and Ayurvedic *vaid*s to put up a joint front to oppose it by convening meetings and conveying to the Governor of Bombay, their disapproval of the Bill. Hence thousands of letters and telegrams were sent to the Government by the Indian practitioners from different parts of the country who demanded the recognition of the Indian systems of medicine and the withdrawal of the Bill. Hakim Saheb himself convened meetings in Delhi and Bombay and demanded that the *vaid*s and *hakim*s should also be given representation on the proposed Medical Council.²⁶ He also demanded that besides the qualified men of the Indian Medical Service, Royal Army of Medical Corps, Army Medical Corps, and the Royal Navy Medical Corps, the medical men of *Madrasah Tibbia*, Delhi, *Banwarilal Ayurvedik Pathshala*, Delhi, the *Takmil-ul-Tib* and the *Madrasah Tibbia* of Lucknow and Pilibhit and Jaipur Ayurvedic School should also be considered eligible for the membership of the Bombay Medical Council. He further demanded that the *Hakim*s and *Vaid*s of these institutions should be kept at par with the certified medical men such as M.D., L.M. & S. of the

24. Lt. Col. J. Jackson, *ibid.*, p. 586.

25. *ibid.*, p. 597.

26. See Memorandum of 25 January 1912, *ibid.*, 1912, Vol. XLX, pp. 251-2.

Universities of Calcutta, Madras, Allahabad and Lahore and other Government Medical Colleges and Schools. Hakim Saheb also suggested that the "unqualified medical men, not educated in the institutions enumerated in the Schedule referred to above, shall be stopped from medical practice in order to protect the people from the same", should be set as the object of the proposed Act.²⁷ These amendments as suggested by Hakim Ajmal Khan were seconded and supported by all the *vaid*s and *hakim*s of India who in their communications, individually and collectively, insisted on their acceptance by the Government.²⁸ In 1910, Hakim Saheb organised the All India Ayurvedic and Unani Tibbi Conference to organise the *hakim*s and *vaid*s to "offer a united voice to the government..."²⁹ This Conference became a useful forum for the Indian practitioners who put forth their demands and opposed the anti-indigenous move of the government through it.

In accordance with the suggestion of the Governor of Bombay for the training of the physicians Hakim Saheb, in another communication of 21 January 1912 presented to him a detailed scheme of establishing an Ayurvedic and Unani Tibbia College at Delhi and pointed out the strenuous efforts which were being made by the true advocates of the two indigenous systems of medicine to organise themselves and submit to some form of training and to use methods of differentiating between those who were genuine *Hakims* and *Vaids* and those who were not. The Scheme was in accordance with the resolution that had been passed by the Ayurvedic and Tibbi Conference in November 1911 to establish a central Unani and Ayurvedic college at Delhi. Elaborating his scheme and its requirements

27. *ibid.*

28. *ibid.*, pp. 236-8 and pp. 253-60.

29. Barbara D. Metcalf, *op. cit.*, p. 304.

Hakim Ajmal Khan mentioned further:

“Now, all of us who have the welfare of India at heart can imagine what an enormous outlay (nothing short of 5 to 6 lakhs for the building and about Rs. 6,000 *per mensem* for the maintenance) will be needed to provide adequate land and buildings of Saracenic or Eastern style, comprising rooms for classes, for surgical operations, for laboratories, for pharmacy, for exhibition of indigenous drugs, for indoor patients, for surgical instruments and apparatuses and models, and it would be impossible to found, such an important institution without the handsome pecuniary aid, particularly from the ruling princes, chiefs, dignitaries and nobility and generally from gentry, philanthropists, patriots and those here and abroad who are anxious to see the medical science of the world brought to a still further degree of perfection, which I have sanguine hopes that the Indian people at large will make a common cause in carrying out the scheme intended for the alleviation of the sufferings of the sons of the soil. I may beg to point out that the sympathy in the present case may be based on two grounds—sympathy with self-effort and sympathy with alleviation of suffering—and whatever our divergencies of opinions may be we can write in the latter ground, especially where the alleviation of suffering affects women and children.”³⁰

While suggesting the course of studies under the proposed scheme Hakim Saheb made it explicitly clear that the Government of India “who govern India for the benefit of Indians,

30. See the scheme of the Ayurvedic and Unani Tibbi College, Delhi as proposed by Hakim Ajmal Khan to the Governor of Bombay, *Bombay Legislative Council Proceedings, 1912*, Vol. XLX, pp. 239-44.

through incurring enormous annual outlay from Imperial and local revenues on medical education and medical relief, must fully realise the fact that whatever is being expended is hardly adequate to cope with the medical needs of the teeming millions of India, and nothing but our own generous efforts to improve the health of the people, which is one of the first essentials of life, will achieve the object for which I am earnestly appealing to the country, and I am confident that if the country makes a move towards the charitable cause the Government of India will be found ever ready and foremost to supplement our endeavours with the liberality befitting its position."³¹

Hakim Saheb hoped that the Governor of Bombay would give due consideration to the legitimate rights of the qualified *Hakims* and *Vaids* before the Medical Practitioners Registration Bill was finally passed into law. The Bill was, however, passed by the Bombay Legislative Council without accepting any suggestion either from Hakim Saheb, or the Tibbi Conference.

Prompted and inspired by the move taken by the Government of Bombay a similar bill was moved in the Madras Legislative Council on 11 November, 1913.³² It was followed by a chain of other provinces such as Bengal,³³ Bihar and Orissa³⁴ and the Punjab³⁵ Legislative Councils where similar bills were introduced on 1 December 1913, 6 September 1915 and 25 September 1915 respectively. Every time Hakim Ajmal Khan had to concentrate his energies on countering the actions of the Government by getting the bills defeated with the help

31. *ibid.*, pp. 243-4.

32. *Madras Legislative Council Proceedings*, Vol. XLI, pp. 62-3.

33. *Bengal Legislative Council Proceedings*, Vol. XLV, pp. 796-7.

34. *Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council Proceedings*, 1915, pp. 350-1.

35. *Punjab Legislative Council Proceedings*, 1915, Vol. VI, pp. 194-8.

of the Indian members but his ceaseless efforts yielded no result.

Undettered by odds Hakim Ajmal Khan, however, decided to launch a continuous movement against this sinister move on a national and larger scale. He, therefore, took the issue to the Central Legislative Council for discussion and consideration. He requested the Indian members of the Central Legislature to espouse the cause of indigenous medicine on the floor of the House and try to convince the Government not to hamper the way of Indian physicians.

Consequently, Khan Bahadur Mir Asad Khan moved a Resolution in the Central Legislative Council on 15 March 1916 that the Government of India, in consultation with local governments, should investigate the possibility of placing the ancient and indigenous systems of medicine on a scientific basis and increasing their usefulness.³⁶ Moving the Resolution the Khan Bahadur felt sorry that while the allopathic system had received more than full recognition at the hands of the government, the other systems, especially the Ayurvedic and Unani, had been left uncared for. He pointed to the fact that there had been a considerable intellectual awakening among the people of India and that both Hindus and Muslims were endeavouring "to conserve the ancient learning of India" and wherever possible, to reconstruct the old edifice on modern lines. He made it known to the Government that public interest and sympathy were being roused by publishing the literature on the indigenous systems and holding the sessions of the Ayurvedic and Unani Conference annually in the principal cities of India. The Khan Bahadur wanted an investigation in these systems because of the fact that the existing medical

36. *Proceedings of the Council of the Governor-General of India, 1915-16, Vol. LIV, p. 337.*

institutions, as well as medical practitioners, were quite inadequate to meet the growing requirements of the country. There was one hospital for every 5500 of the population. For an equally large number of patients who did not come within the reach of these institutions were being treated generally by the local *vaid*s and *hakims*. If, however, the quality of these physicians was improved better results were expected. Then there were but five medical colleges with about 1700 students and 28 medical schools with approximately 4200 pupils for the entire country. This number too was quite inadequate for the vast Indian population. Besides this, the indigenous systems suited to the rural economy since it was less expensive and the rural population had much faith in it.³⁷

Khan Bahadur Mir Asad Ali's Resolution received overwhelming support from most of the members of the House. They came forward to express their views on the preservation and promotion of the indigenous systems of medicine. Rama Rayaningar³⁸ suggested that the government could promote this system by opening schools and colleges for imparting instructions, publishing authenticated texts on their systems and by offering research scholarships. Similarly Sri Gangadhar Chitnavis, Raja Saiyid Abu Jafar Pirpur, Surendranath Banerjee, Rai Sitanath Ray Bahadur, Madhusudan Das, Qamrul Huda, C. Vijaraghavachariar and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya forcefully supported the motion.³⁹ Vijaraghavachariar not only pleaded the case of Indian systems of medicine but challenged the western one also. He spoke thus:

"I freely and frankly admit that Europe has marvellous advance in the matter of surgery. But I deny that they

37. *ibid.*, pp. 337-40.

38. *ibid.*, pp. 340-1.

39. *ibid.*, pp. 340-9.

are superior even now in the matter of treating diseases to the Ayurvedic and Unani systems of medicine.”⁴⁰

He suggested a thorough investigation in these ancient systems of medicine and setting up of chairs in the Medical Colleges and similar other institutions for oriental medicine. However, “if that is not done”, he warned, “do what you like, the oriental systems are bound to perish.”⁴¹ Finding no way out and the entire Indian members enthused the Government had no option but to accept the Resolution.

Thereafter it became a routine with the Indian members of the Council to put questions on the progress of the process for the investigation into the indigenous systems of medicine in the light of the Resolution accepted by the Government. Ultimately, the Government informed the House on 23 September 1919 that the Local Governments had opined that before anything could be done in the direction of placing the Ayurvedic and Unani Systems of medicine on a scientific basis, it was essential that there should be a strong movement among indigenous physicians to reform and organise themselves.⁴² The Government also considered the scientific investigation of the properties of indigenous drugs to be useful. The Government, therefore, announced that it had appointed a Drug Manufacture Committee which was entrusted with the task of making this investigation. Besides other matters the Committee was asked to enquire into the value of indigenous medicine and to collect information regarding those mineral and vegetable drugs which were not included in the British Pharmacopoeia.⁴³ The acceptance of the Resolution and the announce-

40. *ibid.*, p. 349.

41. *ibid.*

42. *ibid.*, 1919, Vol. LVIII, p. 415.

43. *ibid.*

ment of the Government to appoint a Committee was nothing but victory of Hakim Ajmal Khan and his comrades whose six years incessant and relentless efforts, had at long last, convinced the Government of the utility of the indigenous systems of medicine.

But as was apprehended the Committee's verdict went against indigenous system on the ground that it lacked scientific basis. Apparently it only strengthened the government's bias and unjust stand.

However, Hakim Saheb's relentless efforts were crowned with success when at long last the Government conceded to Hakim Saheb's rightful demand to give to the indigenous system its due recognition. As a result of this, Tibbia Colleges were opened by the government of Madras⁴⁴ and Bihar⁴⁵ in their respective provinces and the Government of United Provinces established a Board of Indian Medicine.⁴⁶ The Government also agreed to start a Tibbia College in Lucknow, an Ayurvedic College at Hardwar, and also to provide financial assistance to the Unani and Ayurvedic institutions that were affiliated to the Muslim and Hindu universities. The District and Municipal Boards also appointed the *Hakims* and *Vaids* in local dispensaries.⁴⁷ In fact, the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms of 1919 placed medicine under the State subjects to be controlled by the elected ministers. It brought an end to the Government's discrimination against the indigenous physicians. Then onwards the Ayurvedic and Unani systems of medicine were always supported by the governments. In this way Hakim Saheb proved to be a saviour of the Unani and Ayurvedic sys-

44. *Al-Hakim*, Lahore, May, 1927, pp. 5-8.

45. *ibid.*

46. *ibid.*

47. *ibid.*

tems which formed the part of our national heritage. Had he not zealously pursued in this direction, the Government, it is feared, would have nipped the Unani System for ever.

With the object of seeking governmental recognition, as already mentioned earlier, Hakim Saheb sought to bring practitioners of various medical systems together on the common platform by organising the Ayurvedic and Tibbi Conference which convened its first session in Delhi in 1910.⁴⁸ It was attended by three hundred *Hakims* and *Vaids* from different parts of the country. Recounting the achievements made so far, he exhorted the delegates to reform the existing system. He claimed that the Unani system was in no way inferior to any other system of the world but, as the Indian physicians did not move with the times, the entire system was faced with the threats of near extinction. He stressed that modern full-fledged institutions should be established to teach both medicine and surgery properly. He asked them to incorporate the latest researches in the field of science and medicine. He also wanted them not to shun modern western methods.⁴⁹ However, the Unani physicians of Lucknow disagreed with Hakim Saheb on various points. Not only did they want to keep themselves aloof from other systems but were equally opposed to join hands with the Ayurvedic *Vaids* who likewise considered it harmful to align themselves with the Unani *Hakims*. This was a great set-back to efforts that aimed to convene a joint session in Lucknow. Still Hakim Ajmal Khan managed to hold the Conference at Lucknow in November 1911. Addressing the audience he said:

“Whatever you wish to do for the country, nation or religion, you have to face the opposition. The Tibbi Con-

48. Qazi Mohd. Abdul Ghaffar, *op. cit.*, pp. 86-7.

49. *ibid.*

ference also seems to be involved in it. You are perhaps, aware that the *Tabibs* and *Vaids* are desirous of functioning separately... but as you know the Conference aims at awakening both of them to work together... Both of you should, therefore, work together and work incessantly in this Conference which belongs to none but to your own selves. I have firm faith that within a year or two your efforts will yield fruitful results."⁵⁰

Again, in a paper that he presented at the Conference Hakim Saheb pointed out the deficiencies in both the Unani and Ayurvedic systems and exhorted the physicians to introduce necessary reforms.⁵¹

He aimed at modernising the indigenous systems so that it could provide an effective method of curing the ills of the people. For this purpose he undertook in 1911 a tour of Europe where he studied the latest researches made in the field of medicine and surgery. Although he had gone there for a change of climate due to his own ill-health but his main aim was to observe the process of modernisation through which the researches were being processed. He visited all the important medical centres and hospitals in the west and met physicians of repute. It was here that he met Dr. M. A. Ansari for the first time and developed a life-long companionship with him. Dr. Ansari was the House Surgeon at Charing Cross Hospital under Dr. Stanley Boyd who was one of the most reputed surgeons of England and was also the honorary surgeon to the King. One morning Dr. Ansari introduced Hakim Ajmal Khan to Dr. Boyd who was examining a patient. Dr. Boyd invited Hakim Saheb also to help him in examination of the patient to which Hakim Saheb diagnosed that he was

50. *ibid.*, pp. 92-3.

51. *ibid.*, pp. 93-4.

suffering from an old wound in the upper portion of intestines. Dr. Boyd differed from this diagnosis and invited him the next day to be present at the operation that he was going to perform on the patient. In the words of Dr. Ansari it was, in fact, "a test between the Unani system and the English system of medicine. The operation was going to reveal as to which of the two was in the right." Dr. Ansari remained much concerned about the whole affair as he was afraid that if Dr. Boyd's findings came out true, the Unani system would receive a set-back in the eyes of the British. However, next day when the patient's abdomen was opened for operation, it was found that the diagnosis made by Hakim Ajmal Khan was correct. Dr. Boyd was much impressed and he congratulated Hakim Saheb on his correct diagnosis. He arranged a dinner in Hakim Saheb's honour and introduced him to Mrs. Boyd as "one who had defeated him in the surgical duel."⁵²

After his return to India, Hakim Saheb concentrated on elevating the Tibbia School to the status of a college. In fact his visit to Europe convinced him of the importance of institutions like the ones he saw there. For this purpose he toured the country and mobilised funds from the rulers of various princely states such as Rampur, Tonk, Bhopal, Patiala, Gwalior, Indore, Alwar etc. In January 1915 Hakim Saheb was honoured with the *Kaisar-i-Hind* medal.⁵³ He bought a piece of land in Karol Bagh, Delhi at a very modest rate. In fact, the Chief Commissioner of Delhi Sir Malcolm Hailey put obstacles in securing the land but Hakim Saheb succeeded in getting it through the Viceroy Lord Hardinge with whom he had excellent personal rapport.⁵⁴ Later, the Viceroy of India Lord Hardinge himself laid the foundation stone of the pro-

52. *ibid.*, pp. 97-100.

53. *The Times of India*, Bombay, 1 January 1915.

54. Ziauddin Barni, *Azmat-i-Rafta*, Karachi, 1961, p. 154.

posed Tibbia College on 29 March, 1916.

Initially like many others, the Viceroy was himself sceptical about the efficacy of the indigenous system of medicine and was reluctant to lay the foundation stone but subsequently Hakim Saheb's arguments convinced him. The Viceroy however, advised Hakim Saheb to standardise and modernise the system and to make arrangements in the proposed Tibbia College for imparting instructions in surgery and anatomy on the western lines.⁵⁵ To this Hakim Saheb readily agreed since he himself was making efforts in these directions from the very beginning.

In his address to the Viceroy, Hakim Ajmal Khan said:

"...the Ayurvedic and the Unani systems of medicine are very old. From time immemorial the people of India—rich and poor, literate and illiterate, townsmen and villagers—all have been benefited by these systems and are still deriving benefits from them. These two systems are successfully serving the people even in such big cities as Bombay, Calcutta and Madras where the western system of medicine has taken deep roots. However the Ayurvedic and Unani systems are being taught mostly in the clinics of the *Vaids* and *Hakims* in India so also in some institutions which are run privately. We should, therefore, not feel reluctant to get benefits from modern system of medicine so as to update our own. It is for this reason that we need a college for imparting education in Ayurvedic and Unani systems of medicine as also in subjects like Surgery."⁵⁶

55. See the *Memorandum* on the Pharmaceutical and Chemical Research Institute at the Ayurvedic & Unani Tibbi College, Karol Bagh, New Delhi.

56. *ibid.*

Replying to the welcome address the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge said:

"It was nearly four years ago that my friend, *Haziq-ul-Mulk*, Hakim Ajmal Khan first asked me to lay the foundation stone of the proposed Tibbia College at Delhi. I confess that I felt first some little diffidence about complying with this request as I have been brought up in the traditions of western science and the Government of India, as you all know, are committed to the support of schools, colleges, hospitals and dispensaries based entirely upon western methods of medicine and surgery. I gave the matter very best consideration and though my opinion as a layman is entitled to very little weight, I came to the conclusion that our western system, however much it may strive after perfection, has not attained it yet. Its theories are constantly undergoing change and development and its ideas of the cause and best methods of the treatment of cholera, malaria and plague, to take some striking examples, have undergone remarkable transformations within quite recent years. I may add that it has borrowed some of its best known drugs from the East where the study of medicine was kept alive through the dark ages. If, then, our own system of medicine is to some extent empirical it certainly does not become a mere layman like myself to pass any sweeping condemnation upon the empiricism of its Eastern counterpart and, when I remembered how many millions in India are beyond the reach of the medical aid provided by Government and how many of those who have means of access to our best doctors still prefer to be treated in accordance with the indigenous system, I came to the conclusion that I should be wrong to throw discouragement upon the scheme, the Hon'ble Mr. *Haziq-ul-Mulk* has so much

at heart and which aims at the improvement and development of this branch of medicine on safe and sound lines. While I do not myself rely upon the Ayurvedic and Unani systems, I cannot but recognise that there is good in them and that it is far better for the large masses of people, and the western science cannot for a long time reach them so these ancient systems of medicine should be organised as much as possible to meet present requirements, and that they should have the benefit rather than have no medical treatment at all.”⁵⁷

The proposed College was to have a wing in the name and memory of the late Vicereine, Lady Hardinge who had expired a few years ago. The Viceroy warmly appreciated this gesture of goodwill on the part of Hakim Saheb as “it was her dearest wish to raise the status, brighten the lot and alleviate the sufferings of Indian womanhood.”⁵⁸

The Viceroy’s speech was virtually a defence of the indigenous systems of medicine at a juncture when the provincial governments opposed them and were actively engaged in rooting it out from the country. The laying of the foundation stone of the Tibbia College by Lord Hardinge clearly indicated a shift in the policy of the Central Government towards the indigenous systems but Hakim Saheb had to fight a long crusade against the bureaucracy which did not prefer the Unani and the Ayurvedic to the allopathic system of medicine.

Hakim Saheb thereafter concentrated his energies on the building up of the college on the scientific lines. In fact it was his desire to promote the Ayurvedic system of Dhanvantri, Sushruat and Bagabhatt and the Unani system of Jalinoos and Bu Ali Sina which the Indians had received as a precious

57. *ibid.*

58. *ibid.*

heritage and which had suffered severely by the lack of attention and mismanagement of affairs. He was convinced that if the Indians wanted to get the administration of the country transferred to their hands it was essential for them to pay as much attention to the indigenous systems of medicine as possible along with other national affairs. It was Hakim Saheb's main objective to stabilize and strengthen the Ayurvedic and Unani systems of medicine on the best possible foundations and introduce such timely change as could make them more useful. He hoped to see the day when the imported drugs could be replaced by the indigenous medicines.⁵⁹

Hakim Saheb's untiring efforts succeeded in many ways through the Tibbia School founded in 1889. Till 1921 it had produced 407 physicians. There were 169 students in the college during the session 1917-18, 250 during 1918-19 and 312 during 1919-20. The average attendance throughout these years was over 100.⁶⁰

In spite of the fact that the female education was not so popular in those days. Hakim Saheb successfully made arrangements for giving education in the indigenous systems to the Hindu and Muslim girls by establishing a separate school and a dispensary for them. In 1914 he started the Ayurvedic section also which produced 34 physicians by 1920.⁶¹

In Hakim Saheb's view it was necessary for the Tibbia College to have provision for 'in-patients' to impart practical training. He always pleaded for the teaching of medicine and surgery. He preferred to give education in anatomy through cadavers, books, maps and models and pharmacology through the

59. See the Printed Report of the Ayurvedic and Unani Tibbi College, Delhi—1917-1920.

60. *ibid.*

61. *ibid.*

means of plants and herbs. He also considered a museum and hostel necessary for a medical college, separate wards for the patients suffering from infectious diseases and separate departments for skin disease, gynaecology, paediatrics, ophthalmology, radiology, physiology and pathology.⁶²

Keeping all these requirements in view Hakim Saheb made arrangements for a hospital to attend to the out-patients and in-patients. He also built an operation room, dissection room, museum, separate buildings for infectious diseases and special wards. He also got a syllabus prepared for different classes and courses.⁶³

The College building, the foundation stone of which was laid by the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge was completed by 1920. By that time an amount of Rs. 4,88,334.00 had already been spent over its construction. Hakim Saheb used his personal influence to collect donations from different sources. Besides the Nawab of Rampur, *Maharajas* of Patiala and Indore, there were several others who favourably responded to Hakim Saheb's call and generously donated huge sums of money towards the College building fund.⁶⁴

Long before the completion of the building Hakim Ajmal Khan's views underwent a metamorphosis and he became an ardent nationalist and invited Mahatma Gandhi to inaugurate the new buildings of the Tibbia College on 13 February, 1921.

Welcoming Mahatma Gandhi in his address Hakim Saheb said:

“We have entered this field to make our medical arts complete and to make them developed. We not only aim

62. *ibid.*

63. *ibid.*

64. *ibid.*

at establishing ourselves completely on our ancestor's correct and disciplined ways, but also drawing benefit of the advancement made in medical science the world over. We deem it unfortunate for every science that its doors are shut, and the light of scientific researches is not allowed to enter. The medicine of the world is incomplete. And we open-mindedly accept that while keeping up the eternal and right principles and ways of our elders it is our duty to be prepared to make every effort, which we can do to make our medicines complete and to raise them to a higher level, at all times and in all ages."⁶⁵

Concluding his speech Hakim Saheb said :

"...I have to submit that from 1889 to this time I have made humble efforts, directly or indirectly, to fulfil my duty or service. After the struggle, hard work and discharging of service, I now wish that the burden of this work should not rest on my person alone. Those who want to work should come forward with courage and zeal and share my burden."⁶⁶

Replying to the welcome address Gandhiji said :

"It was not without reluctance that I agreed to perform the ceremony of declaring this great institution formally open. I know that had it not been for the unfortunate estrangement created between the Government and ourselves, His Excellency the present Viceroy would have been requested to open an institution whose foundation stone was laid by his predecessor. You will naturally appreciate my embarrassment in finding myself a substitute for so exalted a personage as the Viceroy. The second

65. *ibid.*

66. *ibid.*

reason for my reluctance is still more personal. I hold strange views on medicine and hospitals and have scrupulously avoided any special contact with such institutions. But my reluctance was overborne by my regard for our worthy Hakimji. I must frankly confess that I have undertaken to perform the ceremony for political motives. I regard Hakimji as an embodiment of Hindu-Muslim unity without which we can make no progress. I regard this institution as a symbol of that unity. It, therefore, gives me pleasure to be associated with today's ceremony."⁶⁷

Paying a tribute to Hakim Saheb's untiring efforts Mahatma Gandhi further said :

"You must have listened to the report just read out with interest and profit. It is a record of substantial progress and strenuous labour. It shows what one man's energy devoted with single-mindedness can do. May God grant long life to Hakimji and enable him to complete the programme sketched out by him. I hope that the monied men of the country will lighten his labours by sending him unsolicited donations."⁶⁸

In his speech made earlier Hakim Ajmal Khan had appreciated the gesture of the former Viceroy Lord Hardinge who had shown his appreciation of the indigenous systems of medicine and also laid the foundation stone of the college building in 1916. Referring to it Hakim Saheb had said :

"...I shall be greatly ungrateful if I do not acknowledge the kindness he showed by laying the foundation stone of the College on 29 March, 1916. It is not the only

67. *Young India*, 20 February, 1921.

68. *ibid.*

favour, he had done to the college but his attention made the government of India to agree to give this college a handsome lumpsum and an annual grant. But the existing situation stopped both the parties from doing so.

His Excellency Lord Hardinge, while laying foundation of this college, had also helped us by expressing his sympathetic views with regard to indigenous medicines. Therefore, as a mark of acknowledgement of his obligations we are also performing the ceremony of unveiling his and Lady Hardinge's portraits alongwith this inaugural ceremony."⁶⁹

Referring to this request to unveil the portraits of the former Viceroy and the Vicereine Gandhiji said:

"You will note that besides declaring this institution open I am to unveil the portraits of Lord and Lady Hardinge. It will give me particular pleasure to be privileged to perform that function giving us as it does an opportunity of showing that in the battle of non-cooperation we are not actuated by an anti-British spirit and that our national ideal includes the treasuring of the memory of good deeds done by anybody, be he English or Indian."⁷⁰

It shows that both Hakim Saheb and Mahatmaji could rise above personal prejudices and antipathy.

Hakim Ajmal Khan expanded the College to the best possible extent. He made special arrangements for the study of internal diseases of human body, equipped the chemistry laboratory and surgery department with the latest apparatuses and equipments. He successfully set up a botanical garden to make

69. See the *Printed Report*.

70. *Young India*, 20 February, 1921.

the students knowledgeable about the Indian herbs and their uses, established a decent museum and opened the departments of skin diseases, gynaecology, paediatrics and ophthalmology. He obtained dead bodies from different places for the purposes of dissection and the study of anatomy for the students who were given training in surgery. Every student was supposed to be present in the operation theatre and to regularly attend the *Matab*—the Clinic.

Hakim Saheb replaced Arabic and Persian by Urdu and Hindi as the medium of instruction and expression in the College so that the students could conveniently learn the art of medicine through their mother tongues. He got the syllabus prepared for all courses by the experts in various fields and made the text books, available in Urdu and Hindi.

The Zenana Tibbia School and Hospital also functioned on the same pattern as the *Dar-ul-Marda*. It treated the female patients for all their diseases. There was an allopathic section of the female hospital also which treated the indoor as well as the out-door patients.

Hakim Saheb made special arrangements for the hostels for the students. They were provided all facilities which they required for peacefully prosecuting their studies.

In fact the college could survive only on the financial aid that Hakim Saheb secured for it from different sources. He visited almost all the important places in India for treating the rulers of the erstwhile princely states and charged one thousand rupees per day as his fee. The royal patients had so much of faith in Hakim Saheb that they never took treatment from any physician other than him and thus willingly paid his fixed fees. In turn, most of the amount received thus was spent on the requirements of the college. Sometimes he toured the country to collect donations from the princes and the

rich people for the college as well as for the Jamia Millia Islamia.

In July 1926 Hakim Saheb established a separate department in the Tibbia College to carry on research in modern sciences named as *Dar-ul-Tahqeeqat*.

In fact he wanted to develop and improve the indigenous Materia Medica and the Ayurvedic and Unani systems of Medicine on modern scientific lines. With these objects in view he laid emphasis on establishing pharmaceutical institutes and compiling and translating into Urdu the medical books and treatises. He, therefore, set up a Research Committee also to modernise the system at the Tibbia College.⁷¹ Addressing the gathering on this occasion, he said.

“It is most essential for us to develop the *Tib* on the same lines of progress made in modern times. Ages have passed, knowledge has reached its heights by moving very fast but we did not make any progress. Not only that we did not make progress but on the other hand we have gone down in the direction of deterioration.”⁷²

He had already deputed Dr. Salimuz Zaman to carry on chemical research on indigenous drugs during his visit to Paris in 1925.⁷³

The Research Department was entrusted with the task of preparing a syllabus for the college in the light of modern researches and the ancient values. It was to make researches on such herbs as were available in India and as had never

71. Hakim Mohd. Ilyas Khan, *Qanoon-i-Asri*, Delhi, 1926, p. 2.

72. Qazi Mohd. Abdul Ghaffar. *op. cit.*, p. 323.

73. Hakim Mohd. Abdur Razzack, *op. cit.*, pp. 49-50. It was in pursuance of Hakim Ajmal Khan's wishes that the Government of free India set up in 1978 the Central Council for Research in Unani Medicine. *ibid.*, p. 52.

come to the knowledge of Indian medical researchers. It was further supposed to investigate into those compounds that were connected with the various ailments and their cure. It was also the function of this Department to evolve a terminology of modern chemistry which could serve as a useful instrument to bring out an authentic and regulated pharmacopoeia for the use of Indian practitioners.

The Tibbia College made tremendous progress under the stewardship of Hakim Ajmal Khan who acted as Secretary to the Board of its trustees. The following chart is a proof of the swelling number of students belonging to the Hindu, Muslim and Sikh communities of the country, who sought admission to the various faculties of the College in different academic sessions :⁷⁴

	<i>Muslim Students</i>	<i>Hindu Students</i>	<i>Sikh Students</i>	<i>Total</i>
1920-21	112	59	6	177
1921-22	115	80	4	199
1922-23	91	90	1	182
1923-24	126	121	2	249
1924-25	165	120	2	287
1926-27	213	113	11	337

In 1923 Hakim Saheb started a separate and new section in the college with *Vedic Dawakhana* and *Ayurvedic Rasayan Pathshala* as its nomenclature. It aimed at preserving the ancient Vedic medicines and promoting the Ayurvedic System of Medicine. It had 69 students during the session 1922-23, 87 during 1923-24, 78 during 1924-25 and 84 during 1926-27. The number of students went on increasing year by year. This section caused more expenditure than income as is evi-

74. See the files of *Al-Masih*, Delhi, from 1921 to 1927.

dent from the statistics of these years. In 1922-23 and 1924-25 it yielded an income of Rs. 1331-1-6 and 2818-7-9, respectively, whereas the money spent on it was Rs. 7234-13-0 and Rs. 6213-12-9 respectively. Similarly, during the session 1926-27 it showed an income of Rs. 9934-1-6 but the expenditure came to Rs. 10492-6-3. In spite of this loss Hakim Sahab lauded and encouraged its functioning and accorded to this section an independent status and identity.⁷⁵

The Ayurvedic and Unani Tibbia College had a Hospital of its own known as *Dar-ul-Marda*. It also served the people in curing their ailments. It had Indoor patients wing as well as an Out-door patients department. It treated thousands of patients every year as is evident from the following statistics:⁷⁶

	<i>Indoor patients treated</i>	<i>Out-door patients treated</i>
1922-23	209	26,715
1923-24	461	42,483
1924-25	508	42,603
1926-27	13,505	57,359

The Tibbia College progressed day by day and yielded fruitful results. It had a sound financial footing. The income and expenditure chart of the college is given as under:⁷⁷

	<i>Income</i>		<i>Expenditure</i>	
Year	Rs.	Annas Ps.	Rs.	Annas Ps.
1920-21	2,71,758	11- 5	4,38,281	-9-0
1921-22	2,95,314	- 3-10	2,85,344	-10-5
1922-23	2,76,917	-12- 3	2,65,804	- 4-0

75. *ibid.*

76. *ibid.*

77. *ibid.*

1923-24	2,99,188- 9- 8	2,73,810-13-9
1924-25	3,28,146-13- 1	3,30,025- 0-5
1926-27	3,34,446- 8- 9	3,36,120- 5-8

In fact Hakim Saheb was successful in securing financial aid for the college from various sources. He was able to get the grants-in-aid from the following:⁷⁸

1.	Bhopal State	Rs	1,800	per annum
2.	Rampur State	Rs	1,200	"
3.	Patiala State	Rs	1,800	"
4.	Delhi Municipal Committee	Rs	4,800	"

Similarly, the *Hindustani Dawakhana* which was established by Hakim Ajmal Khan and his brother Hakim Wasil Khan in 1903 also yielded satisfactory profits. The following is the chart of profits that the *Dawakhana* made in different years:⁷⁹

<i>Year</i>	<i>Profit Yielded</i>
1920-21	Rs 4,499
1921-22	" 68,883
1922-23	" 80,994
1923-24	" 78,136
1925-26	" 1,00,000
1926-27	" 1,25,000

The income yielded from the *Hindustani Dawakhana* was spent for the purposes of the Ayurvedic and Unani Tibbia College. The *Dawakhana* had a very humble beginning, but later it had its own elegant building in the Ballimaran locality of Delhi which was inaugurated by Raja Kishan Kumar in 1910. It had branches all over the country through which the people got fresh and pure Unani medicines. At first it was a joint stock

78. *ibid.*

79. *ibid.*

company but afterwards it was converted into an endowment vested in the School. Hakim Saheb gave to it all his family medical secrets which had never been leaked out to anybody for several generations. Through it he made the standardised medicines available to the people of India and also helped the students of the college to seek useful knowledge. This was how Hakim Saheb rendered a yeoman's service to the cause of indigenous system of medicine and alleviated human suffering.

He regularly convened the sessions of the Ayurvedic and Unani Conference in almost all the important cities of the country, such as Delhi (1910, 1917, 1919, 1921, 1923 and 1926), Lucknow (1911), Amritsar (1913), Patna (1915), Rampur (1916 and 1927), Bombay (1918), Karachi (1919) and Hyderabad (1922). He utilised this forum for raising voice against the moves made by the Government in the direction of its anti-*Tib* campaign. Through it he also supported the noble cause of communal harmony.

It was Hakim Ajmal Khan's conviction that no problem could be solved in India without achieving the goal of communal harmony. It was with this cherished belief that he wanted the *Vaids* and *Hakims* jointly to launch a crusade against the Government for the recognition of the indigenous systems. At the sessions of the Tibbi Conference also he always invited national leaders of Hindu and Muslim communities. In mid March, 1917 he invited Pt. Madan Mohan Malaviya to chair the Conference and called upon the national universities to introduce the Vedic and Tib under their curriculum. In the same months Sir Sankaran Nair presided over the deliberations of the annual function of the Tibbi School. In 1919 he convened in Delhi a joint Conference of the *Hakims* and *Vaids* to establish the Unani and Ayurvedic Colleges throughout the country. Similarly Motilal Nehru was called upon to preside

over the Convocation of the Tibbia College in 1925. *Maharaja* of Bharatpur chaired the *Anjuman-e-Tibbia* in 1926. Lastly Vithalbhai Patel was the Chief Guest at the annual function of Tibbia College that took place in 1927. He was accompanied by Mahatma Gandhi and Ali Brothers.

On all these occasions Hakim Ajmal Khan called upon the national leaders to place the Tibbi movement in high esteem and to realise its worth in the developmental programme of the country. He asked the Hindus and Muslims to wake themselves up from the slumber and unitedly do their duty towards the Unani and Vedic systems of medicine. He made it quite clear that the Tibbi movement in no way desired to displace the allopathic system of the west or to see it fall from the grace. Instead they wanted to work with it in a very harmonious environment. He demanded that the Government should pay the same respectful attention to the Indian systems of medicine which it always gave to the western one.

The national leaders on their part lauded the services that Hakim Ajmal Khan had been rendering to the cause of indigenous system and the Hindu-Muslim unity. They also vehemently supported his demand that the government should give an honourable place to the Indian system in the world of medicine.

The fifteenth Tibbi Conference that was held at Rampur in April 1927 was the last that Hakim Ajmal Khan convened and attended. Addressing the audience on this occasion he said:

“...I have strengthened the foundations of the art of *Tib* by dedicating to it the best part of my life. Now it is your duty to consolidate it for ever by putting up a stru-

cture on it and utilising the means for its development.”⁸⁰

Dr. Zakir Husain has it on record that concluding his speech Hakim Saheb had said that “I have no hope that I would be present in your midst at the next annual conference.”⁸¹ These words proved to be prophetic and indeed he was no more to participate in the deliberations of any function in the following year.

80. Qazi Mohd. Abdul Ghaffar, *op. cit.*, p. 429. In free India Hakim Abdul Hameed, Chief Trustee, Hamdard Dawakhana, Delhi, maintained and strengthened the All India Tibbi Conference of which he himself is the President. The Conference is engaged in continuing the mission that Hakim Ajmal Khan had set for himself.

81. *ibid.*, p. 430.

III

The Politician

ALTHOUGH BASICALLY a physician, Hakim Ajmal Khan could not keep his eyes closed to the ever-changing political scenario. It was an age of unspeakable sufferings for Muslims. The catastrophic events of 1857 had left them dazed, embittered and revengeful. The British held them responsible for the endeavours aimed at the overthrowing of their rule. One of its consequences was the deportation of the last Mughal King, Bahadur Shah Zafar to Rangoon and the murder of his sons in cold blood. Many affluent families were ruined, the learned were humiliated and the rich rendered poor. Such was the British reprisal that the Muslim inhabitants of Delhi, who happened to survive the holocaust did not exceed even a thousand; and they were mostly those who either happened to be the relatives of the prisoners locked up in jail or belonged to 'the pensioner's class'.¹ In the words of Theodore Morrison "Delhi ceased to be a Muslim city" and "all over India Muslim civilisation was in evident decay."² The letters of the renowned poet Ghalib also tell the same tale :

"....the city has become a howling wilderness. Urdu Bazar is gone—what then of Urdu? Delhi is no more a city, it is a camp. The fort, the town, the bazars, and the

1. Asadullah Khan Ghalib, *Kulliyat-i-Ghalib*, Lahore, 1937, pp. 403-4.

2. Theodore Morrison, *Muhammedan Movements*, (ed.) Sir John Cunningham, *Political India*, Delhi, 1968, p. 87.

canals—all are gone...of Muslims only three are left...so many comrades have been massacred that if I die today, there will be found none to weep for me.”³

This excerpt reveals the magnitude of terrorism unleashed by the British against the Muslims. Their property was either looted or confiscated. Though the non-Muslims were allowed to return to the city within a few months of the recapture of Delhi, the Muslims could not re-enter it before 1859.⁴ In fact, a Muslim was generally branded as dangerous. Even the family of Hakim Ajmal Khan did not escape humiliation at the hands of the British. The ruthless suppression of the Muslims moved everybody in the country and even a stalwart like Sir Syed Ahmad Khan lost all hopes of resurgence of his co-religionists. He felt so miserable that once he decided to migrate to Egypt.⁵ But soon he realised that it was not a solution to the problem. So he gave up the idea of leaving the Indian soil and vowed to work for the upliftment of his people. He devoted himself to the challenging task of improving the condition of the people, through the mode of education which he deemed as the only effective means of all ills in the society. With this noble purpose in view he founded the Muhammedan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh in 1877 and advised the Muslims to avail themselves of the benefits of education and not to fritter away their energies in political activities. It was for this reason that Syed Ahmad was opposed to Muslim participation in the proceedings of the Indian National Congress consequent to its birth in 1885.

Like Sir Syed, Hakim Ajmal Khan was also concerned about the future of Indian Muslims and wished their socio-

3. Asadullah Khan Ghalib; *Khutoot-i-Ghalib*, Delhi, 1956, p. 285.

4. Asoka Mehta, 1857—*The Great Rebellion*, Bombay, 1946, pp. 68-9.

5. *Eminent Mussalmans*, Madras, nd. p. 4.

economic and educational advancement. Although he did nothing practical in this direction, his views in the editorial notes of the *Akmalul Akhbar* are nonetheless noteworthy. In fact, Ajmal Khan's father Hakim Mahmud Khan had set up a press under the name *Akmalul Matabey* with the sole object of bringing out books on Unani medicine. But later in 1886 he started in the memory of his great grand father Hakim Akmal Khan, a weekly Urdu paper *Akmalul Akhbar*, published regularly from Delhi. It contained eight pages and was well-looked after by Fakhruddin and sometimes by the devoted disciple of Ghalib, Munshi Biharilal Mushtaq. This paper disseminated important and interesting information on subjects of common interest and was considered as one of the authentic sources of information in its times. Its issue of 1 January 1868 disclosed for the first time government plans for conducting census in India. Again it was this paper which enjoyed the unique distinction of bringing out for the first time the photograph of the renowned poet Ghalib. It contained news as well as views since it carried editor's comments on the political, social and economic topics of the day.

In the beginning Hakim Mahmud Khan's second son Hakim Wasil Khan controlled the press and edited the *Akmalul Akhbar*. Later Hakim Ajmal Khan took over the responsibility. This synchronised with a very critical phase in the history of India in mid-eighties. The Government was vigilant and kept a tight control on the Indian papers. Hakim Ajmal Khan, however, was in favour of the freedom of the press. In those days the papers could be divided into two categories—the pro-British and the anti-British. Making a comment in the editorial columns of the 12 June 1894 issue of the *Akmalul Akhbar* Ajmal Khan wrote that papers which showered praise upon the British government were few and this he considered to be a boon. He admitted that critical views were rarely ex-

pressed by the Muslim press but made it clear that "although less was the number of such papers lesser still was the number of persons who believed in them." He believed that the press was a powerful weapon, more effective than the power in the hands of any government. In his view it was for this reason that the government always remained concerned about the newspapers and journalists of the country.⁶ In the 26 January 1894 issue of his paper he commented that "no sooner does the press express opposition than the government becomes scared" and so "the existing government or parliament can, in no way, crush the liberty of the press, because such a curb over the freedom of the press would not only cause damage to the country but even result in its very destruction."⁷ This is but a pointer to the courage of conviction shown by Hakim Saheb who, in a way, cautioned the government to be moderate and liberal in matters concerning the press.

Through the columns of his paper, Hakim Ajmal Khan advised the Indians to emulate the lives of those people who had dedicated themselves to the cause of nation-building. In fact, such an approach only reflects his deep sense of patriotism. In the 5th January 1894 issue of the *Akmalul Akhbar* he is seen congratulating the patriots who had rendered invaluable services to the nation and never hesitated even to sacrifice their lives and property for their country.⁸

Sometimes Ajmal Khan chided his co-religionists for being cynical on trivial matters. In the same issue he condemns the Muslims of Delhi for cleaving themselves into *Muqallids* and *ghair muqallids* and for wasting vast amounts of money on litigation concerning flimsy issues.⁹

6. Cited by Qazi Mohd. Abdul Ghaffar, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

7. *ibid.*, p. 40.

8. *ibid.*, pp. 37-8.

9. *ibid.*, p. 38.

Ajmal Khan always advocated the cause of women education. He was not much impressed by the European ladies whose education had helped them in the bringing up of their children. Lamenting the lot of his countrymen in the same issue of the paper, Hakim Ajmal Khan attributed their backwardness to their own laziness, egotism, false pride and ungratefulness.¹⁰

Hakim Saheb was against discrimination of all kinds and always stood for equality among men. When he came to know that the British government was treating the convicts discriminately in the jails, he made a caustic remark: "...while the priests are allowed to impart religious instructions to the Christian converts in the four walls of the jails the Maulvis and Pandits are not permitted to sermonise the Indian prisoners with whom the jails are frequent and full." He, therefore, urged his countrymen to be organised and wrote further: "It is a fact that until we ourselves are not made aware of our rights and demand these in an organised manner, we cannot get anything."¹¹

Hakim Ajmal Khan's forebears enjoyed the privilege of being the personal physicians of several rulers of princely states. These contacts acquainted them with the socio-economic conditions of the people in those states and this attracted Ajmal Khan's comments in his paper. In one of the issues of the *Akmalul Akhbar*, he raised his voice against a law passed by the British government preventing the Nizam of Hyderabad from making any new appointment without the prior sanction and permission of the British Resident. He condemned it as a coercive suppression of rights of the princely states and commented that "by doing this all those agreements that had been

10. *ibid.*

11. *ibid.*, p. 41.

reached between the Nizam of Deccan and the British Government are destined to be buried under the dump of dust—and ultimately the ruling powers of the Nizam were sure to be transferred to the British Resident.”¹²

Ajmal Khan watched with interest the proceedings of the Indian National Congress from a distance and often commented upon them. In the 5th January 1894 issue of his paper, he expressed joy and satisfaction over the peaceful completion of the 9th Session of the Congress convened at Lahore in December 1893 and hoped that it was surely going to yield fruitful results. Giving his impressions about the proceedings of the Congress in yet another issue of the paper Ajmal Khan wrote thus:

“It appears that the Congress is becoming successful. It enjoys the support of the most educated and respected group of the people to which even the government pays heed. In no way could this group be termed as cynical. The government is so much inclined towards these people that the membership of the Council and high positions are also meant only for them. The Government not only listens to their abusive language silently but also awards them respectable jobs.”¹³

This refers, perhaps, to the rise of Congressmen to higher positions in public life such as Badruddin Tyabji, Ranade and K. T. Telang who were elevated to the High Court Benches after they had served the Congress as Presidents or Secretaries. Similarly several Congressmen were nominated to the membership of the Council and other governmental agencies. This, in fact, was an acknowledgement and recognition of their ser-

12. *ibid.*, p. 40

13. *ibid.*

vices to the nation. But this practice later ceased and the Congress came to be looked down upon by the British government as a seditious organisation. These editorial comments reflected the mind of Ajmal Khan who often voiced his feelings on the current issues and sometimes fearlessly commented adversely on the British policies despite strict government control of the press.

Apart from occasional expression of views in the columns of *Akmalul Akhbar* from time to time, Hakim Ajmal Khan was never attracted towards practical politics. In fact, true to the traditions of his family he remained attached to the court of Rampur where he was appointed as personal physician of the Nawab. But being an elitist he never hesitated to extend help for a noble cause. Thus he got huge sums of money paid as donations to the Muhammedan Anglo-Oriental College of Aligarh and the Madrasah Tibbia of Delhi by the Nawab of Rampur. Returning later from Rampur, he involved himself in the affairs of the Tibbia school, Indian Medicines Company and the Anjuman-i-Tibbia. The responsibility of looking after these institutions had fallen on his shoulders due to the untimely death of his elder brother Hakim Wasil Khan in 1904. These strenuous occupations resulted in a heart attack after which he went to Iraq (then known as Mesopotamia) for a change. During the course of his journey Ajmal Khan visited all the sacred places in Baghdad, Basra, Najaf and Karbala. The journey gave him an opportunity to have a first hand knowledge of the conditions of Muslims abroad.

Although Hakim Ajmal Khan had kept himself aloof from practical politics, he was only incidentally dragged into it at a time when the Viceroy, Lord Minto received a deputation of 35 Muslims on 1 October 1906 at the Viceregal Lodge in Simla. The deputation was led by the 29-year old His Highness Sultan Mohammed Shah Aga Khan who was the head of the Ismaili

sect of Muslims and had close relations with the British. All the members of the deputation commanded respect, popularity and considerable influence in their respective fields and claimed to represent several professions and various shades of opinion. Besides the Aga Khan, the deputation included such eminent persons as Shahzada Bakhtiar Shah of Mysore, Malik Omar Hayat Khan and Barrister Mian Mohammed Shah Din of Punjab, Barrister Sharfuddin, Syed Ali Imam and Nawab Sarfraz Hussain Khan of Patna, Barrister Abdur Rahim, Khan Bahadur Col. Abdul Majid Khan, Foreign Minister of Patiala, Barrister Mian Mohammed Shafi of Lahore, Vaqarul Mulk Mushtaq Hussain and Mohsinul Mulk Moulvi Syed Mehdi Ali Khan, Honorary Secretary of the M.A.O. College, Aligarh. Hakim Ajmal Khan was the only representative from Delhi which then formed a part of the Punjab.

The deputation presented the Viceroy with an Address which praised the British rule for ensuring peace, security, personal freedom and liberty of worship but criticised the existing system of representation in municipalities, district boards and legislative councils. It highlighted the importance of Muslims as a community and demanded for them an adequate recognition as an important factor in the country. It therefore, urged that 'the position accorded to the Muhammedan community in any kind of representation, direct or indirect, and in all other ways, affecting their status and influence should be commensurate not merely with their numerical strength but also with their political importance...' It emphasised that the Muslim community should have the right to elect their representatives through separate electorates. It also demanded the appointment of Muslims to the Viceroy's Executive Council and the foundation of a Muslim University.¹⁴ Replying favourably to the petition, Lord Minto assured the deputationists that "their political rights

14. John Buchan, *Lord Minto: A Memoir*, London, 1924, p. 243.

and interests will be safeguarded in any administration with which I am concerned.”¹⁵ In the words of Mohsinul Mulk the Muslims were pleased and satisfied as this ‘clear and sympathetic recognition of the rights of Muhammedans’ and ‘historic declaration of the policy of the Indian Government’, had ‘put a new heart’ into them.¹⁶

The deputationists later discussed the possibility of forming an association with a view to safeguarding the interests of Indian Muslims. Consequently most of them assembled at Dhaka on 30 December, 1906 to attend the All India Muhammedan Educational Conference (at a time when the Indian National Congress was meeting at Calcutta amidst an anti-partition movement in Bengal)¹⁷ and decided to form the All India Muslim League. The resolution to form the Muslim League as a “Political Association” was moved by Nawab Salimullah Khan of Dhaka who could not join the deputation at Simla because of his illness. Its objects included the promotion of the feeling of loyalty to the British Government, the protection and advancement of the political rights of Indian Muslims and prevention of rise among them of any feeling of hostility towards other communities. The resolution, seconded by Hakim Ajmal Khan,

15. *ibid.*

16. Cited in the unpublished thesis of Zafar Ahmad Nizami: “The Role of Nationalist Muslims in Indian Politics, 1857-1947” (Jiwa-ji University, Gwalior, 1972), p. 158.

17. The Viceroy Lord Curzon partitioned in 1905 the province of Bengal into West Bengal and East Bengal. The latter was, however, created to appease the Muslims who formed majority in that area. It injured the feelings of the entire Bengali population who launched an anti-partition agitation on a national level. At its 21st session in Banaras (1905) the Indian National Congress recorded “its emphatic protest against the partition of Bengal in the face of the strongest opposition on the part of the people of the province.”

was supported by many others. The League demanded that the partition of Bengal, created by Lord Curzon in 1905, should not be disturbed. In case it was annulled the Muslims of India would agitate as it had by then, become a question of their life and death. Thus was born the Muslim League which later played havoc with Indian politics and also laid the foundation of communal politics in the country. Evidently the efforts of the deputationists culminated in passing of the Indian Councils Act of 1909 resulting in the introduction of the separate electoral system which gave Muslims the right to elect their own representatives. Whose stratagem or victory should it be called, whether of the Muslim League or of the British Government—is any body's guess.

Hakim Ajmal Khan's initiation into politics was, therefore, by virtue of his inclusion in the Simla Deputation in as much as by his support to the resolution concerning the formation of the Muslim League of which he was elected as Vice-President. He attended the Muslim League sessions held at Karachi in 1907 and later at Amritsar in 1908 and benefited it by his valuable piece of advice. Later he hosted the Muslim League session at Delhi in 1910 and welcomed the guests as Chairman of the Reception Committee.

In his Welcome Address Ajmal Khan highlighted the fact that the League existed as an independent political organisation and was entirely separate from the Muhammedan Educational Conference. In his view this marked "an important advance in awakening the political consciousness of the Muslim community". In fact, all the former sessions of the League had been convened simultaneously with those of the Educational Conference as the leaders could not afford to hold political meetings separately and independently. "This session of the League, therefore, possesses" said Hakim Saheb, "a weight which is all its own and is practically the first Muslim gather-

ing with a purely political object...’’¹⁸

As regards Delhi which was the venue of the session Hakim Saheb said that “it was in the fitness of things that a body which took its birth in the city of Jehangir (Jehangirabad or Dhaka) should have completed the stage of its infancy in the city of Shahjahan (Shahjahanabad or Delhi)’’.¹⁹

Surveying the past events Hakim Ajmal Khan hailed the introduction of the Reforms Scheme under the Indian Councils Act of 1909 which had opened “a fresh chapter in the history of British rule in Hindustan” and which made the Indians stand “on the threshold of a new era in the Indian polity”. Elaborating the reforms he said:

“Great and invaluable concessions have been granted to the people, and British statesmanship, ever characterised by generosity and beneficence, is exerting itself to lead the peoples of this Eastern land, step by step, along the path of political progress on western lines...’’²⁰

He was happy that “the real and effective participation of the representatives of the people in the actual work of daily administration” was being ensured and the highest executive and deliberative assemblies of the empire had been “thrown open to the sons of the soil.” Hakim Saheb attributed Mr. Sinha’s nomination to the Viceroy’s Executive Council and Syed Ameer Ali’s elevation to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council as landmarks in the history of the British empire.²¹

Hakim Saheb, thus, expressed the feelings of deep satisfaction that the British Government had carried out the pledges

18. A. M. Zaidi, *Evolution of Muslim Political Thought*, Vol. I, New Delhi, 1975, p. 181.

19. *ibid.*, p. 182.

20. *ibid.*

21. *ibid.*

which had been held out to the Muslims. In his view the potentialities of representative bodies such as Municipal and District Boards, Universities and Legislative Councils had increased enormously after the Indian Councils Act and the question of Muslim representation on them had thus assumed grave importance. He hoped that adoption of the recommendations of the Decentralisation Commission would further enhance the value and status of all local bodies. For all these steps he expressed his gratefulness to the rulers of the country.²²

However, Hakim Saheb felt sorry and disappointed that the Muslims in the Punjab had been denied the right of separate representation in the Provincial Council. Although Punjab was a Muslim majority province, the Muslims found themselves there in a minority in every one of the five electorates which enjoyed the right of electing representatives for the Council. In Hakim Saheb's view, the disparity was to some extent due to the exclusion of district boards from the electoral groups and insufficient Muslim representation on the municipal boards in the Punjab.²³

Hakim Saheb cautioned the Muslims against premature elation at the recent successes in the Punjab elections. He viewed these successes as purely accidental.²⁴ Similarly he thought it necessary to protest against the impression prevalent in certain quarters that Muslims had secured excessive representation in the Imperial Council. This notion was due to the error of including the names of those Muslims in the list of Muslim representatives who had been elected to the Council by mixed electorates as they represented joint interests of all classes and creeds. They were undoubtedly Muslims but not the sole representatives of Muslims alone.

22. *ibid.*, p. 186.

23. *ibid.*

24. *ibid.*

While defending the principle of separate electorates, Hakim Ajmal Khan said that even non-Muslim stalwarts such as Sir Pherozeshah Mehta and Hon'ble Mr. Sinha themselves strongly favoured the provision for the separate representation of Muslims "to an extent which will enable them to be adequately represented on the Legislative Councils."²⁵

Hakim Ajmal Khan condemned the violent activities of the terrorists who were bent upon shedding the blood of the British people and their supporters. He decried the assassination of Sir Curzon Wylie, Mr. Jackson, Mr. Shamsul Alam, the attempt on Viceroy's life at Ahmedabad and bomb discovery at Ambala and called upon the peaceful citizens of the country to co-operate with the Government to put out the fire of sedition and anarchy.²⁶ Since non-Muslims were largely made responsible for terrorist activities Hakim Saheb said:

"Just as we have our duties towards the rulers, so have we other and no less binding duties towards our neighbours. It is obligatory on us not to injure the susceptibilities of peaceful neighbour communities, nor should we dislike a whole community for the unfriendliness of a few of its members."²⁷

Justifying his views, he pointed out how the late Sir Syed Ahmad Khan had foreseen a serious danger for his co-religionists in their joining the national movement and so exhorted them to keep aloof from it. Muslims, he said, had lagged behind in the race for education and were also numerically much weaker than the Hindus. Thus listening to the advice of "the sage of Aligarh" the Muslims had kept themselves aloof from the political movement of the Congress and "devoted themselves whole-

25. *ibid.*, p. 187.

26. *ibid.*, p. 183.

27. *ibid.*, pp. 183-4.

heartedly to their greatest need, the reclamation of the ground they had lost in the field of education.”²⁸ This idea had led to the foundation of the Muhammedan Educational Conference in 1888. Hakim Saheb continued:

“This was the first national effort of the Musalmans which, though innocent in itself, excited the resentment of their neighbours in a manner that was no less unreasonable than it was unexpected. But everyone now can see for himself that if Muhammedans had then permitted themselves to be entangled in political squabbles, the consequences would have been disastrous to their best interests.”²⁹

Regarding the non-participation of Muslims in the Congress activities, Hakim Saheb said that it was an error to think that Sir Syed’s attitude towards the Congress desired the Indian Muslims to avoid politics for all times to come. Syed himself had been helpful in founding the ‘Defence Association’. Since then the number of educated Muslims had increased. Thus a policy of indifference towards the political life of the country could no longer be justified and hence the formation of Muslim League.³⁰ The non-Muslims should in no way be scared of it for “so long as such sectional institutions, whether of the Hindus or of the Muhammedans, do not jeopardise the large interests of the country or community, we should welcome them, instead of criticising their activities.”³¹ He emphasised further:

“...The time, I am positive, has come when Hindu and Muhammedan gentlemen of light and learning should put their heads together, and by agreeing that each community

28. *ibid.*, p. 184.

29. *ibid.*

30. *ibid.*

31. *ibid.*, p. 185.

may legitimately seek to protect and promote its special interests without encroaching on the lawful rights of the other, learn to tolerate one another's existence."³²

As a representative of the Muslims, Hakim Saheb declared that his co-religionists regarded all the loyal and law-abiding Hindus as their brethren. Concluding his welcome address Hakim Saheb said:

"...having achieved some success, we cannot afford to go to sleep. Strenuous work has yet to be done, if we are fully to attain to the object of uplifting the nation from the low level to which it has sunk. The prospect before us is not free from anxiety, and unless we take time by the forelock and forge new weapons to fight the battle of life with new methods, our future will be even more gloomy than our present."³³

This was the first ever public exposition of Ajmal Khan's political thinking which projected him as a leader of the Muslim community. It shows how the mind of the Muslim elites considered the British as their only protector. It is rather interesting to note how Ajmal Khan who had earlier commended the Congress activities through the columns of *Akmalul Akhbar* came to change his views so dramatically and became a champion of the Muslim cause alone. However, it may be observed that at a time when religion was the sole guide and motivating force of the people, such a change in Hakim Saheb's life and views was but natural. Needless to say that nationalism found its way through religion in India. Although Ajmal Khan appeared in this session to be the sole champion of the Indian Muslims, he soon gave up his role as a Muslim leader and became an acknowledged leader of all the communities of the

32. *ibid.*

33. *ibid.*, p. 188.

country. The present Address, when examined carefully, seems to underline two important points of Ajmal Khan's views. First, that the sectional organisations were also useful provided they do not clash with the higher interests of the country and secondly that the Hindus and Muslims should sit together to resolve their differences. It shows his innate desire for the cause of communal harmony. One important omission in his address was that of the partition of Bengal which the League had wanted the Government to declare as a 'settled fact'. In fact the Muslim League leadership was so overjoyed over the introduction of separate electorates that they, perhaps, gave a secondary position to their other demands.

This session of the League which was presided over by Ghulam Muhammad Ali Khan, Prince of Arcot had a great political significance for three reasons. First, it was practically the first Muslim assemblage with a purely political object and independent of the Muhammedan Educational Conference. Secondly, the League expressed its gratitude to the British Government, particularly Lord Minto and Lord Morley, for the recognition of the political rights of the Muslims in the Indian Councils Act of 1909. Thirdly, the League decided to transfer its headquarters from Aligarh to Lucknow. This decision was actually executed two months later i.e. in March 1910. The shifting of the League's centre, in fact, proved to be a boon as now it could breathe in an atmosphere of liberty and peace which helped the organisation to come closer to the Indian National Congress which Hakim Ajmal Khan so earnestly desired.

At Lucknow the League found itself in a different environment. It had now an enlightened leadership to guide its deliberations. Another factor that led the Muslim League to come closer to the Indian National Congress was a meeting of the two organisations convened at Allahabad in January, 1911 at

the initiative of Sir Wadderburn, the then President of the Congress. This Conference of the Hindus and Muslims was held to forge communal harmony in the country. It was attended by about forty Muslim and sixty Hindu leaders of the country. The Muslim delegation included Hakim Ajmal Khan also. Referring to this Conference later in 1918, Hakim Saheb recalled thus:

“...Not very long ago some prominent Hindu and Muslim leaders realised that the real good and prosperity of our country depended on the unity and co-operation of the two great communities of India—Hindus and Musalmans. The idea took shape at a slow pace no doubt, but as everything right makes its own way, this idea of unity too spread and gradually became popular till in 1911 Allahabad was selected for an exchange of views between the representatives of the two communities. A respectable number of Hindu and Muslim leaders met there, acknowledged the necessity of unity and discussed the ways and means of encouraging and strengthening it. The work was taken up by the press and the representative organisations of the two communities with the result that the two sons of the mother who had turned their back upon each other veered round and signs of a revival of amity and concord began to gather and grow.”³⁴

Although there were no immediate gains, yet the conference paved the way for future negotiations. Referring to the Conference in his presidential address at the Congress session at Calcutta in 1911 Pandit Bishan Narain Dar attributed its failure to the British intervention.

Another factor that widened the gulf between the League

34. A. M. Zaidi, *The Encyclopaedia of Indian National Congress*, Vol. VII, New Delhi, 1979, pp. 344-5.

and the Government was the issue of elevation of the Muhammedan Anglo-Oriental College to the status of a university. The Muslim leaders wanted to name it "Muslim University" where as the Government preferred to call it 'Aligarh University'. Hakim Ajmal Khan played a very important role in the negotiations that took place in the matter and was successful in getting several misunderstandings removed from the minds of Muslims.

Yet another point that alienated the Muslims from the Government was the annulment of the partition of Bengal by the King Emperor himself in a royal *darbar* held in Delhi on 12 December, 1911. Some Muslim leaders regarded the partition of Bengal as beneficial to the interests of the Muslim community. Now this was undone at the behest of agitators. The cavalier way in which a 'settled fact' was unsettled shocked the Muslims to the extent that some of their youths decided to join the Indian National Congress. Hearing the annulment of the partition the Secretary of the Aligarh College, Nawab Vaqarul Mulk sadly commented:

"the policy of the Government is like a cannon which passed over the dead bodies of Muslims without any feeling whether amongst them there was anyone alive or whether he would receive any painful sensation from this action of theirs."³⁵

Similarly Nawab Salimullah of Dhaka complained that the Government neither referred the matter to the Muslims nor consulted them before deciding the annulment. He was so much shocked that he retired from active politics and ultimately died after a few months. Although Hakim Ajmal Khan also felt shocked, he had by this time started appreciating nationalist thinking. He was particularly sour with the government on

35. *Aligarh Institute Gazette*, 20 December, 1911 and 10 January, 1912.

its views about the Unani system of medicine which was considered as unscientific. Hakim Saheb now started mobilising public opinion against the British moves. He undertook a tour to Europe in 1911 where he demonstrated the efficacy of the Unani Tib. During this visit he attended the coronation ceremony of George V, received a medal from the British monarch and made a life long friendship with Dr M. A. Ansari and Khwaja Abdul Majeed.

The international situation also helped the alienation of the Muslims from the British. At this time Egypt was passing through a crisis. Morocco had already surrendered to France. Russia, after her defeat by Japan, oppressed the Muslims of Persia and brutally murdered them and then posed a threat to Turkey, the seat of Khilafat. Italy threatened to desecrate the sacred places of Islam. In 1912 Balkan war started and the Turks were made to suffer heavy losses. About this time Libya, a Turkish principality, was attacked by Italy. The British disallowed the Turks to move their soldiers through Egypt. This deeply stirred the feelings of the Indian Muslims against the British. Mohammad Ali's *Comrade* and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's *Al-Hilal* espoused the cause of Turkey. The Aligarh students were so much moved by these happenings that they stopped eating mutton and the money thus saved was sent to the Red Crescent Society in Turkey. They openly preached hatred against the Government by organising demonstrations and distributing hand bills condemning the British for indulging in the persecution of Muslims in West Asia. It was at this time that Mohammad Ali mooted the idea of despatching a medical mission to Turkey.

Whereas the medical services in Turkey were in disarray its enemies possessed not only the latest arms and ammunition but also a systematic medical corps. Hakim Ajmal Khan came forward to help Mohammad Ali in organising the Indian

medical mission to provide medical care to the Turkish forces. For this he neglected his own clinic and spent most of his time in raising funds for the medical mission. He mobilised Muslim public opinion in favour of the mission and removed the misunderstandings which had crept into the mind of some Muslim religious leaders. It created such a deep impact upon the people that thousands of rupees were collected from Delhi alone. Hakim Ajmal Khan also assisted in the selection of the team. The Medical Mission was led by Dr. M. A. Ansari, who hailed from Ghazipur in U.P. and was a well-qualified doctor, having been surgeon at the Charing Cross Hospital in London where Hakim Ajmal Khan had developed close relations with him during his visit to Europe in 1911. Dr. Mohammed Naim Ansari, Dr. Raza of Hyderabad, Dr. Abdur Rahman and Dr. Bari of Bihar, Dr. Mahmudullah of Bengal, Dr. Faizi of Bombay, Dr. Ghulam Mohammed, Shuaib Qureshi, Aziz Ansari, Manzur Mahmud and Abdur Rahman Peshawari were the other members of the Mission. When the mission set out on its journey from the Jama Masjid in Delhi on 1 December 1912, a huge gathering of people gave it a befitting send off. The gathering was addressed by Hakim Ajmal Khan and Mohammad Ali whose speeches charged the atmosphere so much that literally every eye was filled with tears. Equally moving was the send-off given to the mission at the Delhi Railway station where a mammoth crowd had gathered. Addressing the members of the Mission in his famous weekly *Al-Hilal*, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad had written:

“O, the proud and affectionate Muslims, who are
leaving for Balkans

When you reach there, wash the wounds of the Turks
Softly and with great care

See, that the scars are not hurt

Since those are not the wounds of the Turks alone
but are the scars of Islam itself.

The wounds of Islam require soft touch

Consider those wounds as your own and bandage
them with great care.”³⁶

In fact the Muslims of India had become very sentimental. In the words of Dr. Ansari “it was for the first time that the Muslims of India had collectively sent a mission for helping the Muslims abroad during the British rule.”³⁷ Such was the upsurge of emotions that Muslims all over the country warmly greeted the mission at every station and when it reached the Lucknow Railway Station on 2 December, 1912, Maulana Shibli Nomani felt so much excited that he even kissed the shoes of Dr. Ansari. Reaching Istanbul the Mission was received by Basim Omar Pasha and other officials of the *Hilal-i-Ahmar* (Red Crescent). The Mission worked day and night at different places and after serving the wounded for six months returned to India on 4 July 1913. The services rendered by the Mission in Turkey earned praise and every Muslim greeted them with enthusiasm and affection. Maulana Shibli Nomani composed a beautiful poem on the occasion. In the words of Dr. Ansari:

“besides medical and financial help the Mission enhanced moral relationship...but the fact remains that without the participation of Hakim Ajmal Khan this movement could not have been popular among the masses and classes of Delhi.”³⁸

Another incident which created a chasm between the Gov-

36 Cited by Zafar Ahmad Nizami, *Dr. Ansari Ki Siyasi Khidmat, Jamia, Delhi, January, 1983, p. 23.*

37. Qazi Mohd. Abdul Ghaffar, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

38. *ibid.*, p. 123.

ernment and the League and generated anti-British feelings among the Muslims was the part demolition of a mosque to widen the road in the Machhli Bazar locality of Kanpur on 13 August, 1913. Several Muslims who had assembled there to collect the material of the building were shot dead by the police. Many Muslims were arrested and put behind the bars. This incident created a stir among the Muslims of India. Maulana Abdul Bari Firangi Mahali, Raja of Mahmudabad and Mohammad Ali strongly pleaded the Muslim cause and launched a country-wide agitation against the government. Hakim Ajmal Khan joined them soon with Dr. M. A. Ansari who had by then returned to India from Turkey. Hakim Saheb raised funds for the treatment of the wounded by the police and for fighting a legal case in the court. Every week-end he used to visit Kanpur accompanied by Dr. Ansari. Some Muslims, even, thought of organising a deputation to plead the case in England. However, Hakim Saheb ultimately got the issue solved through the good offices of the Nawab of Rampur who had friendly relations with Sir James Meston, the then Governor of United Province. Finally the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge—(with whom Hakim Saheb was on very close terms) himself visited Kanpur and managed to resolve the impasse. This incident further convinced the Muslims that the British government had no regards even for their religious sentiments. It also prompted the Muslim League to change its policy towards the British government.

The League leaders had already started thinking in terms of the Congress policy since December 1910 when its session was held at Nagpur under the chairmanship of Barrister Nabiullah who insisted on the need for Hindu-Muslim unity and thought the policies of the government detrimental to the country as a whole. This voice became louder at the League session in March 1912 as the Government's announcement annulling the

partition of Bengal frustrated the hopes of the Muslim leaders. Thereafter the Muslim League at its Lucknow meeting on 31 December 1913 made a change in its constitution. It set for itself "the attainment of a system of self-government suitable to India by bringing about, through constitutional means, a steady reform of the existing system of administration by promoting national unity and fostering public spirit among the people of India; and by co-operating with other communities for the said purpose."³⁹ This radical step, thus brought the League closer to the Congress. In fact, it opened further avenues for an amicable settlement of differences between the two. However, the first step towards an effective co-operation was taken only in 1915 when the Congress and League simultaneously held their sessions in Bombay. The League session was presided over by Maulana Mazharul Haq who liberated the organisation from the imperial fetters and exhorted Muslims to "have independence and open eyes in the fresh air." He further declared the League, "a progressive body" which was "ready to adopt itself to the interests of time."⁴⁰ Protesting against the policies of the British, the Maulana said:

"...the children of the soil have no real share in the government of their own country. Policy is laid down and carried on by non-Indians which more often than not, goes against the wishes of the people and ignores their sentiments. Unless and until India has got a national government and is governed for the greatest good of the Indian people, I do not see how she can be contented. India does not demand a place in the sun in any aggressive sense but she does require the light of the Indian sun for her own children."⁴¹

39. Mohd. Noman, *Muslim India*, Allahabad, 1942, p. 128.

40. *ibid.*, p. 140.

41. *ibid.*, pp. 141-2.

The tone and tenor of the address was no longer subdued as critics did not care for the wrath of the government. Be it known that for all these changes Hakim Saheb's guidance was lurking in the background.

The Congress and the League again simultaneously held their sessions at Lucknow in 1916 where both the organisations adopted a joint scheme of reforms. For the first time the Congress accepted the principle of separate electorates for the Muslims but the leaders of both the parties considered it as a temporary phase. The scheme recognised Muslims as a minority in all provinces of India except Bengal and Punjab. As such they were given due representation and a weightage in these provinces. In the Muslim majority provinces of Bengal and Punjab the Hindu minority was given equal weightage. In Bengal, Muslims were given 40 per cent of seats whereas they were 55 per cent of the total population. In this way the Muslim League agreed to lose 5% seats in the Punjab and 13% in Bengal in order to gain 13% in Bombay, 16% in U.P., 19% in Bihar, 8% in Madras and 11% in Central Provinces.

The scheme was successfully accepted both by the Hindus and Muslims owing to the untiring efforts of the League President, M.A. Jinnah, Maulana Mazharul Haq, Maharaja of Mahmudabad, Syed Wazir Hasan and Hakim Ajmal Khan. Hakim Ajmal Khan was a member of the League Committee to confer with the Congress Committee to work out the details which ultimately culminated in the Congress-League scheme. But, according to Dr. Ansari, Hakim Saheb thought that the majority of the Muslims should have been maintained in Bengal and the Punjab and the provinces where they were in minority the Council seats should have been reserved in proportion of their population. For a minority would always remain a minority and it would never be overwhelmed by the majority. It was for this reason that he never supported the

conversion of the Muslim majority of Bengal and Punjab into a minority for the purpose of political adjustments. But, as the Lucknow Pact had unanimously been adopted both by the Hindus and Muslims, he did not oppose it and accepted it in toto.⁴² As regards the separate electorates and Hindu-Muslim unity Hakim Saheb later in 1918 expressed his views thus:

“...a considerable number of educated persons among the Hindus...held that the right of separate representation conceded to the Mussalmans under the Minto-Morley Reforms, stood as an insurmountable obstacle in the way of its (Hindu-Muslim unity) achievement. At last the Muslim demand for separate representation and communal electorate was accepted by Hindu leaders at the Lucknow session of the Congress in 1916 when all the questions which came up for decision in connection with the co-operation of the Congress and the All India Muslim League were satisfactorily settled. Hindus and Mussalmans can be justly proud of this happy consummation of efforts of their leaders, results of which will be equally beneficial to both. A number of persons had certain misgivings about the Hindu-Muslim Agreement, and did not consider it satisfactory, but it had the support of the responsible leaders of the country and a vast majority of educated India.”⁴³

This desire for communal harmony, embodied in the Lucknow Pact of 1916, heralded the dawn of a new era of fraternity in India. The recommendations of the Congress-League deliberations were adopted in the form of a Joint Scheme for Reforms and were later submitted to the British government. Now the

42. Qazi Mohd. Abdul Ghaffar, *op. cit.*, pp. 161-2

43. A. M. Zaidi, *The Encyclopaedia of Indian National Congress*, Vol. VII, New Delhi, 1979, pp. 348-9.

League and the Congress could be seen standing on one platform shoulder to shoulder fighting for a common cause and striving for a common goal for which Hakim Ajmal Khan was also responsible to a great extent.

IV

The Agitator

THE WORLD WAR-I broke out in Europe on 4 August, 1914. Britain also joined it against Germany in the same month. Looking to the emergency caused by the war, the Indian leaders relegated the question of constitutional reforms to the background and gave their whole-hearted support to the British Government.

Mahatma Gandhi, then simply known as Mr. M. K. Gandhi, after arriving in London at the same time from South Africa, also appealed to the Indian people to help Britain in her hour of need. The Muslims also decided to support Britain in her war efforts. The support was, however, extended on the clear understanding that the British would respond favourably towards the Indian demand for freedom. For this a meeting was held on 16 August 1914 at the Town Hall in Delhi which was addressed by Hakim Ajmal Khan, Dr. Ansari and Ali Brothers. They all extended whole-hearted support to the British Government. Hakim Saheb made it clear that freedom could be gained only by adopting friendly attitude towards the British and not by coercing or by opposing it. He wanted the British government to fight with an undivided mind so as to bring the war to a successful end.¹ Consequently the Muslims also joined other communities by placing their services at the disposal of the government and offered themselves to be sent to

1. Zafar Ahmad Nizami, Unpublished Thesis: "The Role of Nationalist Muslims in Indian Politics, 1857-1947 (Jiwaji University, Gwalior, 1972), pp. 199-200.

any war front as combatants. The British Prime Minister welcomed "with appreciation and affection" the offer of aid and assistance given by the people of India.²

In November the war took a new turn when Turkey joined it on the side of Germany. It caused great anxiety among the Muslims of India who further felt worried about the safety of their holy places in the Mid-Eastern regions. The British government, however, assured the Indian Muslims that they "would spare the holy places from being brought into the vortex of war" and that they were further negotiating with the allies in this regard.³ A notification of the Viceroy also declared that the holy places would be immune from attacks or desecration by naval and military forces. This viceregal assurance was further confirmed by the British Prime Minister, Mr. Asquith on 9 November. But these verbal assurances of the British Government in no way removed the worries of Muslims, as the very participation of Turkey in the war against Britain had created a situation in which any untoward event could happen to hurt their religious susceptibilities.

In an article in the *Comrade* under the caption "Choice of the Turks", Mohammad Ali justified the decision of Turkey to join hands with Germany against the Allies. Many Indian Muslim leaders supported his views. The British government felt alarmed at this. Consequently it confiscated the security of the *Comrade*, in which the article had appeared and charged Mohammad Ali and his brother Shaukat Ali of conspiring against the British government and sent them to jail for an indefinite period. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad also suffered similar loss of his deposits for the *Al-Hilal*. The *Al-Hilal* Press was confiscated in 1915, but when he started a new press called *Al-Balagh* and

2. *ibid.*, p. 200.

3. Chaudhry Khaliquz Zaman, *The Pathway to Pakistan*, Longmans, 1961, p. 28.

brought out a journal under the same name, the Government externed him from Calcutta in 1916. Similarly Maulana Zafar Ali Khan and Maulana Hasrat Mohani were also interned.

Hakim Ajmal Khan was shocked at the repression of the Muslim leaders who were championing a genuine cause. Ultimately he withdrew his moral support to the British war efforts for which he had been awarded the *Kaisar-i-Hind* Medal on 1 January, 1915. His loyalty was suspected by the British government and he, too, lost faith in them due to the anti-Tib steps taken by the provincial governments. They also feared that Hakim Saheb might be clandestinely conspiring with the Afghans to overthrow the British Government. This fear was generated by Hakim Saheb's association with Mohammad Ali's organisation *Khuddam-i-Kaaba* and then with the *Nizarat-ul-Maarif*, an academy of the Quranic learning, founded in 1913 at Delhi by Maulana Ubaidullah Sindhi under instructions from *Shaikh-ul-Hind* Maulana Mahmud Hasan, the Principal of Deoband Seminary. Apparently the academy was meant for educating the educated Muslim students in the Quranic teachings. Clandestinely, however, it was busy preparing the students for anti-British activities. In fact Hakim Ajmal Khan and his companions were of the opinion that nothing could be done in India during the war to fight the British, unless the Germans attacked India with the help and co-operation of the King of Afghanistan, and thus, affording an opportunity to Muslims to revolt openly against the British. Consequently Maulana Sindhi left India for Kabul in 1915 where he was appointed Home Minister of the Provisional Government of India with Raja Mahendra Pratap as President. Satisfied with the success of the government the *Shaikh-ul-Hind*, accompanied by several of his devotees, set out for the Haj to develop wider contacts with the Muslim world. He met several Turkish leaders including the Turkish War Minister Anwar Pasha who assured him of all possible help to the freedom

movement and even suggested an attack on India through Khyber Pass.⁴ The Minister further addressed messages of hope and encouragement to the people of North-West Frontier Province on the pieces of Silken cloth so secretly that nobody could decipher them. It was for this that the Rowlatt Committee, in its report, named the whole affair as the silk-letter conspiracy.⁵ These messages were secretly smuggled into India and Kabul and were subsequently distributed among the tribal people of the Frontier Province. However, the *Shaikh-ul-Hind* was later arrested in Mecca with his followers and was interned at Malta which was then the centre for the political and war prisoners of the British India. It was this association of Hakim Saheb with the Muslim revolutionary *Ulema* that created apprehensions in the mind of the British Government. Dr. Ansari has it on record that the Director of Secret Intelligence, Sir Charles Cleaveland was of the opinion that there was some clandestine connection between India and Kabul and he also considered Hakim Ajmal Khan and Dr. Ansari as the invisible link between the two. This assumption of Sir Charles led to the searches of the houses of Muslim leaders in Deoband, Saharanpur, Panipat and Delhi. Their statements were recorded and they were threatened to face difficulties if they did not reveal the identity of the persons involved in it. Hakim Saheb and Dr. Ansari were also contacted by the Police who afterwards kept surveillance on them. The plain clothes policemen were deputed to watch their movements both at home and their clinics and their mail was intercepted continuously for two years. But ignoring all these official provocations Hakim Saheb continued to maintain relations with Afghanistan as he felt that she could be helpful in the freedom struggle.⁶

4. Ziyaul Hasan Faruqi, *The Deoband School and the Demand for Pakistan*, Bombay, 1963, p. 61.

5. See the *Sedition Committee Report*, New Delhi, 1918, p. 176.

6. Qazi Mohd. Abdul Ghaffar, *Hayat-i-Ajmal*, Aligarh, 1950, p. 224.

Despite the fact that Indian people were giving all support to the British government in their war efforts, they were not oblivious of their cherished political aspirations. There was already wide-spread resentment on the arrest and imprisonment of Mrs. Annie Besant by the Madras Government in June 1917. Both the League Council and the Congress Committee which met in Bombay in July took stock of the situation and arrived at several important decisions. It was decided that a deputation consisting of the League and Congress members may be sent to England to plead India's case. A petition was also prepared and submitted to the British Parliament. The British government was urged to take immediate steps to grant self-government to India.

The British Government was quick in response. Within a month of the League and Congress meetings came the announcement of Mr. Montague, the Secretary of State for India on 20 August, 1917 which declared the policy of the British Government's "increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions, with a view to the progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire."⁷ This was received in India with mixed feelings.

Commenting upon this Hakim Ajmal Khan said from the Congress platform :

"This announcement admits India's right to self-government and, in so far as it does that, we thank the Government for it. But I have to observe with regret that the restrictions and limitations contained in it have prevented the public from offering it an unqualified welcome. It has failed to satisfy the people of the country. Had it omitted the words 'progressive realization' or even mentioned a fixed period

7. *Report of Indian Statutory Commission*, Calcutta, 1918, p. 1.

within which complete self-government was to be attained the Government would, perhaps, have succeeded in winning public confidence. Even without the omission, India would have offered the announcement a warm welcome had she not been aware of the fact that in political dictionaries the word "progressive" had a widely different meaning from the one it bore in common parlance. But in a country where, according to the latest statistics (1915-16) conditions of education are such that for a population of over 24 million people (British India) there are not more than 147 Government Colleges and 1598 high schools and only 3.13 per cent of the population are under instruction, and more than this, where the pace of progress in every direction depends entirely on goodwill and pleasure of the Government, not one or two but a number of generations will have to come and go before the 'progressive realisation' of responsible government."⁸

Further elaborating the announcement and the realisation of the goal of responsible government Hakim Saheb vehemently declared :

"...Under these circumstances we should be excused if we consider the announcement of the 20th August as unsatisfactory and declare that the proposals based on the announcement cannot win our support and confidence."⁹

Thus Ajmal Khan had joined the group of those Congressmen who had expressed their dissatisfaction over the announcement at a time when they expected quite a considerable instalment of self-government.

Mr. Montague personally visited India in November 1917. It

8. A. M. Zaidi, *The Encyclopaedia of Indian National Congress*, Vol. VII, New Delhi, 1979, p. 348.

9. *ibid.*, p. 349.

was a historic event for this country as he was the first Secretary of State who ever touched the Indian soil. All the important sections of the Indian society met him to put forth their points of view. Mr. Montague devoted six months to evolve a scheme of political reforms for India in consultation and collaboration with the then Viceroy Mr. Chelmsford. The joint report of their recommendations was published on 12 July, 1918. Broadly it made four sets of recommendations which constituted the basis of the report:¹⁰

- i) "There should be, as far as possible, complete popular control in local bodies and the largest possible independence for them of outside control."
- ii) "The provinces are the domain in which the earlier steps towards the progressive realization of responsible government should be taken. Some measure of responsibility should be given at once, and our aim is to give complete responsibility as soon as conditions permit. This involves at once giving the provinces the largest measure of independence, legislative, administrative and financial of the government of India which is compatible with the due discharge by the latter of its own responsibilities."
- iii) "The Government of India must remain wholly responsible to the Parliament, and saving such responsibility, its authority in essential matters must remain indisputable, pending experience of the effect of the changes now to be introduced in the provinces. In the meantime the Indian Legislative Council should be enlarged and made more representative and its opportunities of influencing government increased."
- iv) "In proportion as the foregoing changes take effect, the

10. *Report of Indian Statutory Commission*, Calcutta, 1918, pp. 2-3.

control of Parliament and the Secretary of State over the Government of India and provincial governments must be relaxed.”

The Mont-ford proposals thus comprised all that the British were prepared to give to India but it fell far short of the expectations of the people, who expected much more substantial reforms than what they were offered. The Congress at its special session held in Bombay in August 1918 under the chairmanship of Hasan Imam recognised the fact that some proposals in the Report constituted an advance in some directions but declared that the scheme as a whole was “disappointing and unsatisfactory.” The Muslim League also adopted a resolution on practically the same lines as those of the Congress.

In December 1918 the 33rd session of the Congress was held for the first time in Delhi with a record number of delegates. A special feature of the session was the presence of an unusually large number of *Kisan* delegates from different parts of the country. Another feature was the presence of an equally large number of prominent personalities as delegates who had kept themselves aloof from the special session of the Congress held earlier in Bombay in August. Hakim Ajmal Khan was the Chairman of the Reception Committee, a position that he had held in 1910 when the Muslim League had convened its session in Delhi.

Speaking on the Mont-ford proposals Hakim Saheb said that the scheme brought to the forefront the important problems which the Indians had been facing for years but had now offered “an occasion to pass in review all our inalienable birth-rights which we have been increasingly demanding for the last thirty three years”. Surveying the political scenario he stated that there was a school of thought in India that considered the proposals extremely derogatory to the national dignity. Similarly there was another school which held that Indians had a firm footing on the first stage of the proposals, that to the second stage they had

a barely precarious access but to the third stage the scheme did not even show a way. The third school was of the view that the scheme should be accepted provided certain specified modifications were carried out in it. However the fourth school of thought recommended the rejection of the scheme on the grounds that it overlooked some essential demands of the country.¹¹ Analysing various view-points he said:

“The discussions of these various schools had not yet crystallised into anything definite and the reforms scheme was still being subjected to a careful analysis and criticism when President Wilson announced to the world his memorable principle of peace. Of these the principle of self-determination on which he laid special emphasis and the certain prospect of its forming the basis of discussion at the Peace Conference gave fresh impetus to our aspirations and created a new wave of enthusiasm in the country which grows in volume and intensity as time goes on. This war...has thrown the entire social and political order of the world into the crucible and the British Government too, which entered this war in the defence of Right and Justice, has adopted the peace principles of President Wilson.”¹²

Elaborating these principles, Hakim Saheb, rightly raised the issue of self-determination by saying:

“...Now when the right of self-determination is being granted to the smallest nationality in Europe, the question is naturally asked whether India which has so ungrudgingly and cheerfully made sacrifices in the defence of the principles of liberty and freedom, right and justice, be deprived of the right to determine her own form of government? Can

11. A. M. Zaidi, *op. cit.*, p. 346.

12. *ibid.*, p. 347.

she be denied the right which her sons have won for others.”¹³

He referred to the first struggle for home rule and thus pleaded the Indian case further :

“...if Ireland, inspite of reasonable relations of a certain section of her people with the enemy, her open efforts against recruiting during the present war, the feelings of disaffection which she has openly and freely expressed against England from time to time, can claim the right of self-determination and be given Home Rule, India, who readily responded to every appeal of the Government and whose invaluable assistance has been acknowledged and praised by His Majesty the King Emperor, his ministers and the Viceroy, cannot be deprived of the rights which the powerful hands of the Allies are restoring to all the weaker and oppressed nationalities today.”¹⁴

This was a frank statement on the need of the hour and the demands of the Indian people in accordance with the Declaration of President Wilson which had been accepted by the Allies with regard to the right of self-determination. In fact the Indians had extended their co-operation to the Allies in the hope of receiving freedom and justice for which Britain had entered the arena of War. But, whereas the European nationalities were being assured of their rights for self-determination, India was in no way, referred to despite its extent. It obviously made the Indian people worried and they started casting aspersions over the British intentions.

Hakim Saheb dealt with the Mont-ford scheme at a greater length and took it up item-wise in his Welcome Address. The

13. *ibid.*

14. *ibid.*

report had declared its aim of granting complete popular control in local bodies. So far as this clause was concerned, there was no doubt that the Indians had been treated liberally in the matter. But when a comparison was made of "this generous treatment with the proposals in regard to the Provincial and Imperial Governments" he was reminded of the famous partition between a poet and his brother who said: "from the floor to its roof the house belongs to me; and from the roof to paradise is all thine." He, therefore, suggested "that little" which had been kept back from Indians under this head should also be given to them so that "at least the lowest branch of administration be completely under their control."¹⁵

Speaking on the clause of provincial councils that created dyarchy, he said that practically all the important departments were proposed to be treated as 'Reserved Subjects' and were beyond the popular control. So far as the departments proposed to be entrusted to the ministers were concerned, these were under the popular control "only at the will and pleasure of the Government" and could be taken out of that control if, and when, it so chose. He felt the clause had a lacuna as no limitations had been put on the powers of the dyarchic executive. Although the number of elected members in the Council was substantially raised, yet a number of restrictions and limitations curtailed the powers of the Council. Hakim Saheb proved these defects by quoting extensively from the Report and asked as to what benefit could the Indian people derive from the so-called "substantial elected majority". He, therefore, termed the proposed reforms as nothing but 'nominal'.¹⁶ He asserted further:

"...if the Government sincerely desires to give responsible government to India it should confer increased and

15. *ibid.*, pp. 349-50.

16. *ibid.*, pp. 350-1.

extensive powers on Indians in the Provincial Councils. For this it is essential that the division of Reserved and Transferred subjects and the distinction between Executive Committee and Ministers should be dispensed with. All the departments, without exception, should be entrusted to the charge of Ministers and the Members of the Legislative Council should be expected to realise their responsibilities and elect competent Ministers for the administration of the departments."¹⁷

Like many of the Congress leaders Hakim Saheb also wanted the division of the subjects into 'Reserved' and 'Transferred' to be removed. He, thus, rejected the dynarchical form of executive and called for entrusting the popular Ministers with full responsibility and powers. He was in favour of full responsible government at the provincial level which the Indians had aspired for long since he considered them competent enough to look after the administration of their country. Refuting the British charge levelled against his countrymen. Hakim Saheb said:

"... The allegations that Indians are not competent to administer important departments is not based on facts. Indians have discharged and are discharging with entire satisfaction, on the Executive Council of the Viceroy, duties similar to, yet more important than those they are considered unfit to be trusted with, in the provinces. Is it not surprising that men who have passed with credit a higher test on the Council of the Government of India should be declared incompetent to manage similar work on a smaller scale? It is proposed to increase the Indian element in the Executive Council of the Viceroy and the Report recommends the appointment of a Second Indian

17. *ibid.*, pp. 351-2.

Member. He will, no doubt, be selected from one of the provinces. Yet the scheme does not consider this very person fit to control the administration of the sacred 'reserved subjects' in his province."¹⁸

The Reforms Scheme had proposed to establish a Grand Committee for every Provincial Legislature, to be chosen for each 'certified' Bill, partly by election by ballot and partly by nomination. The extensive powers with which the scheme proposed to invest the Grand Committee, Hakim Saheb considered it a rope round the neck of the Legislative Council. He was opposed to the Council President's appointment by the Governor which, in his view, was a very subtle and effective way of exercising silent pressure on free expression of opinion. He was of the view that with the existence of a body like the Grand Committee and in the face of the powers reserved with the Governor, the Indian members were destined not to have an effective voice in the Legislative Council.¹⁹

Similarly Hakim Saheb was not satisfied with the shape of the Central Government in the proposed reforms. He considered the proposed changes and reforms in the Central Government as mere "phantom figures than real living beings." He also expressed his concern about the silence of the scheme on the extent to which the Executive Council was to be increased.

The Congress-League scheme of 1916 had demanded 150 members in the proposed Legislative Assembly but the Montford Report reduced it to 100. Hakim Saheb could not see any special advantage that the Report sought from the reduction. Even in respect of the powers of the Assembly, Ajmal Khan expressed his apprehensions. In his view the members were denied the liberty of putting questions in the real sense. They were

18. *ibid.*, p. 352.

19. *ibid.*

not to vote the budget and had no power to reject or modify a Bill certified by the Governor-General-in-Council to be 'essential to the interests of peace, order or good government'. Same was the position of the proposed Council of State which, in his view, was similar to that of the proposed Grand Committee, but more reactionary in composition and more effective in coercing the popular Assembly than Grand Committee.²⁰

Hakim Saheb suggested five proposals for the consideration of the British Government if it was really desirous of giving to Indians the right of self-government. These were:²¹

- i) The distinction between the Ministers and Councillors should be abolished.
- ii) Ministers should be appointed at the recommendation of the Legislative Council.
- iii) The idea of Grand Committee should be given up but if it was considered indispensable, its members should be elected by the Legislative Council.
- iv) There should be no restrictions on the members to put questions in the Council although the Government could refuse to answer any question for reasons mentioned in the Report.
- v) The Legislative Council should elect its own President.

"It is only after it has made these necessary modifications" said Hakim Saheb, "that the Government can rightly claim to have granted us self-government in the real sense of the word."²²

Concluding his observations on the reforms, Hakim Ajmal Khan said:

20. *ibid.*, pp. 354-5.

21. *ibid.*, p. 353.

22. *ibid.*

“In short, the proposals aim at maintaining the present position of Indians in the Government of India and the changes proposed are merely nominal or useless. For, the House, which is proposed to have power is beyond their control and the power of the House in which they are in a ‘substantial majority’ amounts to zero.”²³

He endorsed the modifications as suggested by the special session of the Congress in regard to the proposals about the Government of India. Expressing his own opinion Hakim Saheb said:

“... Judging the capacity of Indians with an unbiased and unprejudicial mind, departments of the Government of India can be safely entrusted to their control.”²⁴

As regards the status of Delhi where the 33rd session of the Congress was being held, he spelt out the demands which were submitted to Mr. Montague and Lord Chelmsford in the form of an address by the local citizens of Delhi. These demands were as follows:

- i) an extension of the province in order to have sufficient revenues for growing needs;
- ii) a Governor-in-Council for the extended province;
- iii) a final Court of Appeal and a University;
- iv) until the reconstruction of the Province the right of representation both in the Punjab and Imperial Legislative Councils;
- v) at least 50 elected members in the Municipal Committee and the right to elect its President and appoint other municipal officers.²⁵

23. *ibid.*, p. 355.

24. *ibid.*, p. 356.

25. *ibid.*, p. 349.

Hakim Ajmal Khan, who termed these demands as moderate and reasonable, regretted that these just wishes had been practically ignored and the Reforms Scheme was totally silent on the question of Delhi. He, therefore, felt constrained to draw the attention of the Government to those demands. In fact as a Delhite, Hakim Saheb had greater concern for Delhi which was "associated with the glorious civilisation of the two great communities of India." He was happy that the British Government had at last restored its past honour and dignity by declaring it as the capital of the country. He was sorry that a centre like Delhi had been deprived of the honour of offering a welcome to the Indian National Congress, which in his view, was the 'national assembly.'²⁶ It was due to his efforts that the Congress session had been convened in Delhi. The Muslim League session of 1910 was also held in Delhi on the initiative of Hakim Ajmal Khan and now he was also instrumental in holding the Congress session. But there was a marked difference between the two. If Ajmal Khan's tone in 1910 was that of the leader of Muslims alone, in 1918 it was for all the communities of the country. Here he championed the cause of all. Not only that he welcomed the Indian people to the Congress session but he also chided his co-religionists for their policy of isolation. Exhorting the Muslims he said:

"It is difficult to make amends for the injury they have already done to their interests by keeping aloof from the Congress and if they abstain from taking part in the important movement that are fast developing in the country, in a perfectly constitutional manner, it will be well-nigh impossible for them to maintain their position. For the last 33 years the Congress has been offering a common platform for the whole of India. It has appealed for co-operation to Mussalmans in the same manner as to Hindus, Par-

26. *ibid.*, p. 343.

sis, Sikhs and Christians. If Mussalmans fail to respond to that appeal they have no right to say that the Congress is not for them. Now especially when the political organisation of the Mussalmans, the All India Muslim League, has after safeguarding their special interests, joined hands with the Congress, there is no excuse left for them and I feel sure that in the future they will attend the Congress in ever-increasing numbers, co-operate with their Hindu brethren and fearlessly safeguard the honour and interests of their motherland.”²⁷

In his view it was only the unity between the two great communities—Hindus and Muslims—which could help in the attainment of self-government in India. A champion of communal harmony, Hakim Ajmal Khan, thus expressed his heart-felt anguish on the existing relations between the Hindus and Muslims and said:

“The manner, in which India is moving on the path of unity for sometime past, is not very pleasing to the supporters of Hindu-Muslim unity. . . . If any community wishes to secure a legitimate and reasonable right from the other, the only way to do that is through sincere friendship, mutual regard and deliberation. Any other way is disastrous. It should be the first and foremost duty of those who sincerely desire Hindu-Muslim co-operation, to make serious and sustained efforts, to stop any recurrence of the painful incidents which sap the very foundations of unity between the two communities. If they want to win liberty and freedom for their country they must remain united.”²⁸

Hakim Saheb, thus, wisely felt that the communal harmony was the key to self-government. He expressed his happiness over the successful termination of war during the course of which

27. *ibid.*, p. 357.

28. *ibid.*, p. 356.

not only perfect peace prevailed in the country, and even when only 15,000 soldiers were left in the whole of India, the vast population of three hundred millions did not waver in its loyalty to the British Raj. But now when the time had come for gathering the fruits of these sacrifices, he hoped that the legitimate aspirations of the Indians would receive just and sympathetic treatment and that, "India shall be given the proud place in the family of Nations which she rightly deserves."²⁹

Speaking on the role of Indian Muslims in the war, Hakim Saheb said that inspite of their extremely difficult and delicate position they conducted themselves with a commendable restraint. He clarified:

"The Government was engaged in a war with their brothers in faith and most painful and provoking news about their Holy places incessantly poured in. They were not deficient in courage to give expression to their feelings during the continuance of the war but they preferred to wait till the great conflict was over."³⁰

On behalf of the Muslim community he expressed his grateful thanks to Gandhiji who not only sincerely sympathised with them in times of their need, but also proved himself to be a brave and outspoken champion of their cause. Ajmal Khan showed his grave concern for the safety and independence of the Holy places. He also expressed his concern over the question of Khilafat which was "a part and parcel of the Muslim faith" and declared that no outside interference in this respect would be tolerated by the Muslims.³¹

Hakim Saheb, was equally concerned about the internees and political prisoners who were languishing in different prisons of

29. *ibid.*, p. 359.

30. *ibid.*, pp. 359-60.

31. *ibid.*, p. 359.

the country. He hoped that with the change in Government policy towards India these internees would also be released. He also raised his voice against the Press Act and wanted the Government to repeal this inhuman piece of legislation as free press was a pre-condition for a healthy national life.³²

In fact the cause of internees was very dear to his heart. Soon after the release of Mrs. Annie Besant from jail in November 1917, Hakim Saheb had been trying to secure the release of the Muslim leaders who were languishing in different jails. To make these efforts more effective an organisation was formed called the *Anjuman-i-Eaanat-i-Nazarbandan-i-Islam* with Raja Saheb of Mahmudabad as President, Dr. Ansari and Mr. Abdur Rahman as Secretaries and Hakim Ajmal Khan as its Treasurer. Its office was located at Fatehpuri where the literature on the conditions of the internees used to be published and the efforts were consistently made to secure their release.³³ It had branches all over India. His residence became the hub of political activities and he set out to collect funds for this purpose. Speaking on the issue Hakim Saheb once said:

“Eversince the war has broken out the process of internment has been constantly on. Our religious leaders have been interned whose piety is universally recognised and revered throughout the Islamic world. Our popular leaders have been deprived of their liberty. It gave us grave shock but no ear was put to the appeals made by us... Although we remained peaceful during the entire period of war but now we are compelled to raise our voice for securing their release... All through the period of war we maintained peace and served the Government to the best of our ability... but now the circumstances have

32. *ibid.*, p. 361.

33. See *Chand Aham Khatut*, No. 1, *Anjuman-Eaanat-i-Nazarbandan-i-Islam*, Delhi, nd.

compelled us to do so... It is a voice of protest from the heart which has been hurt. This is worth considering a fact that when the hearts are so hurt to what extent the loyalty could be expected..."³⁴

Such utterances became common and Hakim Saheb openly came out to oppose the Government's policy of detaining the Indian leaders.

Hardly had Hakim Ajmal Khan uttered the words "...now that the time has come for getting the fruits of those sacrifices, let us hope that our legitimate aspirations will receive just and sympathetic treatment", the British Government introduced in the Imperial Legislative Council two Draft Bills to replace the Defence of India Act. The one proposed alterations in the existing law while the other dealt with emergency legislation. The very introduction of the Draft Bills roused hostile feelings and the entire Indian society considered it as an endeavour on the part of the Government "to erect a monstrous engine of tyranny and oppression".³⁵ The nation considered it as the charter of slavery. Even Gandhiji described the ignominy of the Bills in three negative terms: "*No appeal: no vakeel: no daleel*". Ironically though, it was the reward to Indians for rendering invaluable assistance in war efforts by sending the sons of their motherland to be sacrificed for the lofty ideals of liberty and freedom on the battlefields of Europe, Asia and Africa.

Finding no change in the attitude of the Government, Gandhiji prepared a pledge which was signed both by the Hindu and Muslim leaders of the country, including Hakim Ajmal Khan. The signatories to the pledge solemnly affirmed that in the events of the Bills becoming law they would refuse to

34. Qazi Mohd. Abdul Ghaffar, *op. cit.*, pp. 177-8.

35. Verney Lovett, *A History of the Indian Nationalist Movement*, London, 1968, pp. 196-7.

obey these and such other laws. Gandhiji, later announced his decision to launch a satyagraha movement if the Bills were passed into law.

The Government, considering the gravity of the situation and hostile public reactions, dropped the first Bill but went ahead with the second one which was termed as the Indian Criminal Law Amendment Bill. This led Gandhiji to give a clarion call to the nation to launch a satyagraha movement on 30 March 1919 which was to start with a countrywide *hartal*. But later it was postponed to 6 April, 1919. He called upon the nation to observe fast for 24 hours, to suspend all work for the day and to hold public meetings to pass resolutions for the withdrawal of the Act. The proposed programme of the *satyagraha* was to mark the beginning of a new experiment in politics and a novel method of redressing grievances and political wrongs.

As the Delhi people did not know about the change in the date for starting *satyagraha* from 6 April, they started their movement on the 30th March itself as was originally planned. On that day they observed a successful *hartal* and took out a peaceful procession.

In fact, Delhi, after its being the capital, had become very sensitive in political matters. In the words of Hakim Saheb "as this city happened to be the place where one of the Rowlatt Bills was carried through in spite of unanimous Indian opposition, the citizens of Delhi, perhaps, felt the keenness of the situation more painfully than the rest of India... Hence Delhi witnessed a complete suspension of business on 30 March 1919." Some of the persons assembled at the railway station in the forenoon to persuade the hawkers to suspend their work. The Station Superintendent thereupon got three of them arrested. The demand for their release resulted in police firing on a large crowd. Later the people, who had assembled at the Clock Tower

in Chandni Chowk, also met the same fate. On 31 March the *hartal* continued on account of the events of the previous day. But owing to the efforts of Hakim Ajmal Khan and a few other leaders the people were calmed. From 1 April 1919 shops began to open and gradually business was resumed. On the 6th another spontaneous *hartal* took place since this was the new date on which the *satyagraha* was to be launched throughout the country. Evidently the people of Delhi wanted to be in line with other parts of the country. On the 9th the news of Gandhiji's arrest at Palwal, who was on his way to Delhi, created great sensation in the city and the gravity of the situation brought about yet another spontaneous *hartal* which continued till 16 April. In the meantime the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy created such hostile feelings that some Criminal Investigation Department officers were roughly handled by the crowd on the 14th. On the 17th there was police firing which resulted in some casualties.

All through these days Hakim Ajmal Khan remained preoccupied in making efforts to keep the city peaceful. He moved from place to place and met persons in different walks of life asking them to maintain peace. He alongwith other leaders such as Dr. Ansari and Swami Shraddhananda made it a point not to disturb the communal harmony in Delhi. It was largely due to the efforts of Hakim Saheb that the bonds of Hindu-Muslim unity were further strengthened. During another indiscriminate police firing a number of persons died but nobody bothered to find out as to which community the dead persons belonged. Whosoever could pick them up, carried them to the burial or cremation ground. It was a common sight to see Hindus carrying Muslim dead bodies and Muslims doing the same to their Hindu brothers. "The sight was wonderful" commented Swami Shraddhananda. "The Muslim biers were mainly carried on Hindu shoulders and the Hindu biers were supported by Muslim shoulders. And the beauty of it was that none of the bier car-

riers afterwards repented or apologised for having given shoulder to a *kafir's janaza* or to a *malichhas' arthi*".³⁶ Once when a *janaza* was stopped for prayers for the dead, some Muslims asked Swami Shraddhananda and other Hindus "to turn over faces away from them, the *Imam* came running and stopped them saying: 'Swamiji', we are all God's people. We want you to join our prayers". And Swamiji joined them "with all his heart."³⁷ He was so touched with the sincerity of Muslim satyagrahis who lost their lives in those incidents that he visited Jama Masjid of Delhi at its Friday congregation where he was cordially received by Hakim Ajmal Khan and other Muslims and was seated on the pulpit in the mosque on which no non-Muslim had ever sat. He called upon the audiences not to forget the sacrifices made by the martyres.³⁸ In his letter of 17 April 1919, the Chief Commissioner also reported that "on the 4th the Jama Masjid prayer meeting passed off without any disturbance, but was remarkable for the fact that a number of Hindus were invited into the mosque and the Arya Samajist Munshi Ram (Swami Shraddhananda) was allowed to address the assembly from the pulpit."³⁹ Similarly Swamiji joined the prayers of the dead at another great mosque of Delhi, the Fatehpuri Masjid in Chandni Chowk.

Inspired by such ennobling examples, presented by Hakim Ajmal Khan and Swami Shraddhananda, the masses belonging to both communities worked hand in hand to make their movement a success. "Goondas had ceased to exist", observes Swamiji, "every Hindu woman was treated like his own mother, sister or daughter by every Mussalman and vice versa."⁴⁰ The

36. Swami Shraddhananda, *Inside Congress*, Bombay, 1946, p. 62.

37. *ibid.*

38. *ibid.*, p. 70.

39. *The Hunter Committee Report*, 1920, p. 209.

40. Swami Shraddhananda, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

people were so enthusiastic that they even boycotted the British courts and preferred the decisions of their leaders. Swami Shraddhananda and Hakim Ajmal Khan decided hundreds of such cases to the satisfaction of both the parties.

Hakim Ajmal Khan, Rai Bahadur Sultan Singh, Abdul Rehman, Pearelal, D. Shroff and others formed a non-official committee to enquire into the disorders that took place in Delhi. The Committee had several meetings and sittings where the people were interviewed and questioned on the happenings in the city. However, it ceased to meet when the Hunter Committee was set up to enquire into the incidents of Delhi, Punjab and other places.

Hakim Ajmal Khan was one of those few leaders from Delhi who deposed before the Hunter Committee. His was the most fearless statement submitted to the Committee in which he came out with facts and did not hesitate to blame the Government for its lapses and repressive acts. On the incident of 30 March at the Delhi railway station, Hakim Saheb said :

“So far as I have been able to ascertain, no attempt was made by the responsible officers on the spot to disperse the crowd by resorting to expedients. If at that time the Hindu Muslim leaders had been sent for and their services availed of to persuade the crowd to go away, I am sure so many valuable lives of the Delhi citizens would have been saved and the sufferings on account of the wounds inflicted on the crowd avoided...it would not be out of place to mention here that it is justified by the officials on the allegation that the crowd had become unruly and noisy and one of the men was so near the British troops that he tried to snatch away the bayonet of a British soldier and was bayoneted by him. Even if this allegation turns out to be true, I do not believe that this one instance could

justify firing on an unarmed crowd mostly consisting of by-standers.”⁴¹

Also, on the subsequent firing at the Town Hall Hakim Saheb believed that “more humane methods would have met the situation.”

On the events and police firing of 17 April when a person was arrested for forcing a shop-keeper to close his shop, Hakim Saheb again stressed that nothing untoward would have happened, had the police not arrested the person or had the Deputy Commissioner released him when the public had requested him to do so.

The following excerpt from the evidence deposed by Hakim Ajmal Khan before Lord Hunter on 7 November 1919 makes a tell-tale reading :⁴²

“Q. What happened to the man? Was he retained in the custody?

A. He was in custody at the time and when I and others wanted to have a look at him we were told that he was in the lock-up.

Q. Do you know what happened afterwards? Was any charge made against him?

A. He was sentenced to three months imprisonment but I do not know under what section.

Q. Did you see any firing on that occasion yourself?

A. I only saw one firing—the firing was done at the Town Hall.

Q. Was that on the 17th?

A. Yes.

41. See *The Hunter Committee Report*, 1920, pp. 199-200.

42. *ibid.*, pp. 92-3.

Q. What did you see at the time of firing?

A. Before the firing, some persons came running from Ballimaran street and said that they were fired at when they were passing by the road that goes opposite the Town Hall.

Q. Did you see them fired at?

A. I saw them fired at. I came out from the Town Hall at that time.

Q. Who fired? Was it the police or military?

A. I cannot say exactly, but as far as I remember it was the Police.

Q. From where did they fire?

A. From that part of the street that leads into the Queen's Garden.

Q. How many of the police were altogether?

A. About 20 to 25. Those who were fired were not more than 20 or 25 .

Q. Did you hear any order given to fire?

A. I did not hear.

Q. Were stones being thrown or any missiles being thrown by the people?

A. Nothing was thrown at that time.

Q. Did you see any stones thrown by the people?

A. No.

Q. Had any of the mob any weapon in their hands?

A. They were running very fast and I did not see any weapons.

Q. Could you not see any *lathis* in their hands?

A. No.”

The forthright evidence proved to the hilt the high-handedness of the police and the administration. In his written statement submitted to the Hunter Committee regarding the events that took place on the 17th April 1919 at Delhi, Hakim Ajmal Khan said:

“From this date onward the behaviour of the police and the attitude of the Deputy Commissioner became extremely objectionable. The police caused extensive arrests and the Deputy Commissioner appointed 14 of the respectable citizens as special constables. This was regarded both by those who were thus appointed and by the public as humiliating and insulting...”⁴³

Hakim Saheb specifically clarified his point further while answering the questions asked by Sir C. H. Setalvad before the Hunter Committee. About the Chief Commissioner Mr. Hailey and Deputy Commissioner Col. Beadon, he said all that he thought about them. It is evident from the following excerpt from the Report of the Committee.

“Q. So far as you yourself the leaders of Delhi and the people with whom you are in touch, are concerned, was there a general dissatisfaction against Mr. Hailey’s administration, specially with regard to his attitude towards political movement?

A. So far as I am aware of the feelings of the leaders of these movements, Mr. Hailey did not like them and consequently, of course, they did not like Mr. Hailey’s way of treating them...

43. *ibid.*, pp. 199-200.

Q. What was the attitude and mind of the people towards Colonel Beadon?

A. Generally he was not liked.

Q. Why was he not liked?

A. There were several reasons. His general treatment was harsh and he mostly devoted his attention to municipal affairs. He did not look to other matters and also sometimes he was not very nice in treating people. There was some difference of opinion as to how the *Dussehra* procession should proceed about two years ago, and his ultimate decision did not please the public.

Q. We heard the same thing of the *Ramlila* procession?

A. Yes.

Q. A couple of years ago there were various prosecutions started by Colonel Beadon against certain leaders in Delhi. If I remember, Asaf Ali was prosecuted?

A. There was a case against Asaf Ali, but I could not say exactly.

Q. Those prosecutions were in connection with their addressing public meetings?

A. Yes"¹⁴

Similarly Ajmal Khan considered the Chief Commissioner Mr. Barron, the successor of Mr. Hailey, responsible for the events that took place in Delhi as is evident from the following cross-examination:

“Q. Do you think that the state of feeling between the authorities and the people that you have described is a mea-

44. *ibid.*, pp. 93-4.

sure responsible for the events that actually occurred?

A. It was one of the factors that led to these incidents.”⁴⁵

Ajmal Khan was of the opinion that besides the attitude of the authorities, the military and police were equally responsible for deterioration in the situation. This fact is confirmed by the following evidence:⁴⁶

“Q. During these days, from 30th March to 17th April, in your view was there any necessary display of military and police authority?

A. Generally the sight of the police and the military aroused the feelings of the people. It would have been more advisable if the authorities, supposing they thought it necessary to have police precautions...had kept them in the background and were not so much shown.

Q. Why were the people so irritated at the sight of the police?

A. Generally in India the relations between the Police and the people are not friendly, specially in Delhi during these days.

Q. In India are the police very much disliked? Are they hated by the people?

A. Especially in these days they were very much disliked. They are generally disliked everywhere, they are disliked in Delhi also...

Q. ...during these days, could order have been maintained without the police and the military?

A. In my view I do not think there would have been any

45. *ibid.*

46. *ibid.*

breach of the peace. Perhaps the utmost that might have happened would have been the breaking of a few windows at the railway station. Nothing more would have happened if the police and military were not there.

Q. Is it your view that it was the interference of the police and the military that caused the disturbances? Is that what you suggest?

A. If the police and military were not there, it is very obvious that no firing would have taken place."

Hakim Ajmal Khan thus fully availed himself of the opportunity provided to him by the Hunter Committee to expose the evil designs of the British Government towards Indians. He rightly blamed them for bringing Delhi to such a situation where violence would have erupted spontaneously. But his own efforts to assure the people and make them peaceful were unforgettable. During these upheavals, he visited the authorities even as late as mid-night. The Deputy Director-General Intelligence and Senior Superintendent of Delhi Police, H. V. B. Hare Scott, Chief Commissioner C. A. Barron and Additional District Magistrate M. L. Currie confirmed this fact later that the services of Hakim Ajmal Khan were always available for the peace-making efforts. In his 17 April 1919 letter to Sir J. H. Du Boulay, the Chief Commissioner, C. A. Baron wrote that Hakim Ajmal Khan and his friends made "genuine efforts to collect a number of assistants to help" him to keep the atmosphere peaceful.⁴⁷ Similarly the Deputy Commissioner of Delhi, Lt. Col. H. C. Beadon, addressed a letter to the Chief Commissioner, C. A. Barron, on 20 May 1919 in which he wrote.

"It must be confessed that the leaders especially Hakim Ajmal Khan worked very hard. During the night they

47. *ibid.*

organised volunteers and they were all out early in the morning to persuade the shopkeepers to open the shops. Mobs were out too, but, inspite of their presence, a large number of shops were opened . . . ”⁴⁸

The events of March and April 1919 later led the Government to levy punitive tax on the people of Delhi but Hakim Saheb categorically asked them not to pay it. On this occasion he issued a statement which said:

“The people of Delhi hate this punitive tax and since they consider it unjust they do not wish to pay it . . . I fail to understand that when several valuable lives of Hindus and Muslims were lost due to the negligence of some officials how was it justified for the people to pay willingly this imposed tax. It is, therefore, my duty to share the just and legitimate feelings of the Hindus and Muslims of my country and not to pay this tax which is absolutely illegal.”⁴⁹

Not only the British authorities but also the Indian leaders paid glowing tributes to the efforts made by Hakim Saheb and others. Addressing a meeting at Chawpatty in Bombay, Gandhiji thus referred to the incidents in Delhi:

“ . . . it was truly an event of which, when time has done its work, India will be proud. All honour to *Sanyasi Shra-ddhanandji* and Hakim Ajmal Khan for their effective and brave leadership.”⁵⁰

Gandhiji moved a resolution in the same meeting which was unanimously passed. The resolution said :

“This meeting of the inhabitants of Bombay tenders congratulations to the inhabitants of Delhi for exemplary

48. *ibid.*

49. Qazi Mohd. Abdul Ghaffar, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

50. *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XV, p. 186.

self-restraint under the trying circumstances and to Swami Shree Shraddhanandji and to Hakim Ajmal Khan for their admirable leadership . . .”⁵¹

Thus the role of Hakim Ajmal Khan was lauded both by the British and the Indians in the incidents that took place in Delhi in the wake of Anti-Rowlatt Bill *Satyagraha*. He was a non-official witness who was examined at Delhi by the Disorders Inquiry Committee presided by Lord Hunter which had to be appointed by the British Government to investigate into the events that led to the Amritsar tragedy of Jallianwala Bagh. Thus when the Congress, the Muslim League, the Khilafat Committee and the Jamiat-ul-Ulema convened their sessions in December 1919, Hakim Ajmal Khan was unanimously chosen by the Muslim leaders to preside over the deliberations of the All India Muslim League at Amritsar.

51. *ibid.*, pp. 187-8.

The League President

IN THE Christmas of 1919 the All India Muslim League, the Indian National Congress, the Khilafat Committee and the newly born Jamiat-ul-Ulema held their respective sessions at Amritsar—the city of martyrs. In fact, Amritsar had become a place of pilgrimage for the Indian people, after the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy, and provided an impetus to the Indian leaders for giving a new direction to the nationalist movement. The meetings of all the four important organisations at one time and at one place was the best homage which could be paid to the brave martyrs of the province.

The Muslim League met under the presidentship of Hakim Ajmal Khan who had not only been its founder member but also its host at Delhi in 1910. Welcoming Hakim Saheb's election to the presidentship of the League, Gandhiji commented thus:

“...the well-known Hakim Ajmal Khan of Delhi has been unanimously elected...Hakimji's family has lived in Delhi for generations. It is both an old and distinguished family...He holds Hindus and Muslims in equal regard and the two communities pay him the same respect. His political views are similar to those of the Congress. His election should be welcomed by Hindus and Muslims alike.”¹

Mahatma Gandhi had already paid rich tributes at

1. *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XVI, pp. 285-6.

Bombay to the able leadership of Hakim Ajmal Khan and Swami Shraddhananda on their successful peace-making efforts in Delhi during the Anti-Rowlatt *Satyagraha*. Thus, his election to the high position of the League presidentship was warmly welcomed by all. It was during these very days that political amnesty was granted to all internees and this was hailed by all the national leaders including Gandhiji, Tilak, Motilal Nehru and Hakim Ajmal Khan. As a result all the leaders were freed from different jails. The Ali Brothers straight away reached Amritsar from Chhindwara prison to join thousands of those who had assembled there to pay their homage to the martyrs. Welcoming the two leaders Hakim Saheb said:

“Although their release was effected owing to the Royal Proclamation but for this the Government does not deserve our thanks. If the Government had freed them in response to the repeated memoranda, requests, appeals and applications submitted to it by the Muslims from time to time we would have thanked them from the very core of our hearts. But when the Muslims found that their appeals were turned down and their memoranda were set aside, they decided to keep themselves mum and left everything to the sweet will of the omnipresent Almighty God by bowing their heads before Him. Thus their release, in fact, is an outcome of the Royal Proclamation for which the Government does not deserve any feeling of gratitude.”²

In his lengthy presidential address Hakim Ajmal Khan dealt at length with all the major problems that the country was facing. He condemned the atrocities done to the people of India in general and those of Punjab and Delhi in particular and placed its sole responsibility at the door of the British Government

2. Qazi Mohd. Abdul Ghaffar, *Hayat-i-Ajmal*, Aligarh, 1950, pp. 218-9.

who had "been ruling India without the least regard for the desires of their subjects". He asked as to "why the legislation of the Rowlatt Act was deemed essential, while such effective weapons as the Prevention of Seditious Meetings' Act, the Press Act and the Defence of India Act were available in the armoury of repressive enactments, and more especially when, rightly or wrongly, the proclamation of martial law, by means of an ordinance was fully within the limits of Government's competence." Tracing the history of the events from the very introduction of the Rowlatt Bills in the Legislative Council Hakim Saheb wisely said that:

"...had wiser counsels prevailed, there is simple reason to believe that not a single life would have been lost. If fire had not been opened on the unarmed crowd in Amritsar, if Gandhiji had not been arrested and if the advice of the leaders had been listened to, it can be stated without fear of contradiction that, so far as Punjab was concerned, no untoward incident would have taken place."³

This is reiteration of what Ajmal Khan had told the Hunter Committee in November 1919 while deposing his evidence before it. Now he was making this known in the public from the League platform which had set the loyalty to the British crown as its object in the past. In fact, Hakim Saheb's address was a long history of the events narrated chronologically with a vivid description of repressive measures taken by the British Government against the non-violent and law-abiding people of the Punjab. "It deserves to be mentioned" said Hakim Saheb "that Indian blood was recklessly made to flow in Jallianwala Bagh, with the outrageous result that so far over 500 dead bodies have been traced". He condemned the authorities for not mak-

3. A. M. Zaidi, *Evolution of Muslim Political Thought in India*, Vol. II, New Delhi, 1975, p. 179.

ing any arrangement for providing medical aid to the wounded in the Jallianwala Bagh. The wounded were left unattended and were not given any medical aid inspite of the fact that the atmosphere was rending with the shrieks of the victims. Hakim Saheb further condemned the Government for the operation of martial law before it had been actually proclaimed in the Punjab. Referring to other methods of torture and humiliation he said: "who can forget the outrageous crawling order of General Dyer, by which human beings were compelled, under pain of punishment, to degrade themselves to the level of animals? And who can ever forget the infamous floggings?... It seems that the late Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Michael O'Dwyer desired to benefit not only his own province by his *Nadirshahi* reign but wanted to extend its blessings to other parts of India as well." In fact Sir O'Dwyer did not content himself with proclaiming martial law but also gave a *darte blanche* to men of such pronounced 'competence' as General Dyer in Amritsar and Col. Frank Johnson in Lahore. Gen. Dyer cruelly fired incessantly in Jallianwala Bagh killing hundreds of Indians and Col. Frank Johnson, besides committing several heinous crimes of genocide, punished hundreds of students. "How can one characterize these punishments", commented Hakim Saheb "except as being a leaf out of mediaeval history? In the present age, inflicting such punishments, and proudly boasting of them, can only come from individuals wholly devoid of human attributes." Not only that the Government used their guns to shoot down the people but they did not hesitate even to drop some bombs in Gujranwala which resulted in several casualties.⁴

Enumerating the wrongs committed in the Punjab before or after the announcement of martial law, Hakim Ajmal Khan mentioned only a few instances such as flogging, refusal to grant bail to the people, the arrest of persons on information sup-

4. *ibid.*, pp. 177-181.

plied by the police without due inquiry, handcuffing and marching those under arrest and sending the arrested persons by cattle trucks. This was enough to tell the "deeply sad tale" of the inhuman repression of the fair province of Punjab. He characterised this as "one mistake after another, like those committed by a physician, who causes endless harm to the patient, by failing to diagnose the disease." The Amritsar happenings clearly showed that "the united blunder consisted in the muzzling and deportation order served on Dr. Satyapal and Dr. Kitchlew, which emanated directly from Lahore, without previous consultation with the man on spot, who had every right, being entrusted with the sole responsibility of keeping order in this District, to be consulted in respect of so delicate a matter."⁵

Referring to the Hunter's Committee that the Government had to appoint in response to India's constant demand for a searching inquiry into these occurrences, Hakim Saheb asked the people to patiently await the report although the experience of such committees in the past had been abundantly depressing. He did not have high expectation from it except that it could have a moral effect. He was sorry to say that the Congress request for the deposition of certain incarcerated Punjab leaders, with a view to securing the best non-official evidence, was rejected. It ultimately resulted in the formation of the Congress Commission which was equally important and was busy in its work of collecting the evidence and giving out its findings. In his opinion Gen. Dyer, Col. Frank and others had made the task of non-official Committee light as they had deposed their evidence before the Hunter Committee. "In fact, India may be fully content with reprinting the statements of those witnesses and circulating them widely in England to bring home to the British the real nature of the activities of some of their able

5. *ibid.*, p. 187.

representatives in ruling India, and also to let them have an idea of the value and worth these men attach to Indian lives.”⁶ He further said:

“It is India’s misfortune that the men at the helm of her affairs seem to be actuated with the belief that the central principle of government must ever be repression. Although the evidence daily accumulating drives one to the conclusion that the repression always leaves a vigorous dynamic force in its wake, yet our Government prefers to adhere to its antiquated political creed, its daily increasing deleterious results notwithstanding.”⁷

Concluding his views on the Punjab Hakim Saheb observed:

“If Lord Curzon laid India under debt of gratitude by the partition of Bengal, Sir Michael O’Dwyer has done nothing less, by his *Nadirshahi* rule in the Punjab, and of which we shall soon begin to be conscious. Sir Michael will have occasion to be proud of his achievement, if political activity is snuffed out in the Punjab. But, if the real political life of the Province begins after his strenuous efforts to stamp it out, the ex-satrap will have occasion to realize the magnitude of his blunder. He will then realize that the bitter poison he administered to the Punjab, actually proved the elixir of life to her.”⁸

In fact Ajmal Khan’s address was a sad commentary on the sordid acts of the British in Punjab and could be said to be the viewpoint of every Indian. Whatever he spoke from the League platform on Punjab was the common subject-matter of other leaders’ speeches that had been delivered from the Congress, the Khilafat and the Jamiat platforms.

6. *ibid.*, p. 188.

7. *ibid.*

8. *ibid.*, pp. 188-9.

When the national organisations were meeting in Amritsar, the Government of India Act was in the making. Although, Hakim Ajmal Khan had already made his views on the Reforms known to the public from the Congress platform in December 1918 and subsequently through other agencies, he thought it appropriate to reiterate his viewpoint once again as the League President also. Speaking on these he often referred to other matters as well. He, thus, felt that "so long as India's share in the Central Government is not of a really satisfactory nature, we cannot hope to have seen the last of the massacre of Jallianwala and the bombing of Gujranwala." Although he did not doubt the good intentions of Mr. Montague, who took endless pains to finalise the Reforms Scheme, he was compelled to observe that these reforms "do not fulfil the promise vouchsafed to us."⁹

However, Hakim Ajmal Khan was satisfied with some of the modifications in the Reforms Scheme which he himself had suggested in his address as Chairman of the Reception Committee. He was also happy over the recommendation made by the Joint Committee with regard to the selection of the President of Indian Legislature. But he expressed his concern over the role of provincial Governors who had been invested with the power to dismiss the ministers. As regards the financial powers of the legislature, Hakim Saheb said:

"When we realise that we have no 'fiscal autonomy', which is the essence of our demands regarding economic control, without which commerce and industry must remain in a static and lifeless condition, we can hardly entertain any hope of developing our commerce and industry."¹⁰

Ajmal Khan also spoke on the division of subjects into the

9. *ibid.*, p. 189.

10. *ibid.*

Reserved and *Transferred* ones. Since he was always interested in the educational matters of the country, he desired that education should be completely a 'transferred subject'. He was sorry for not giving the women right to vote. Similarly he was unhappy over the disqualifications laid down in the scheme for an aspirant of the membership of Legislature. However, viewing the Reforms as a whole, he called upon his countrymen "to welcome them as the first stone of the foundation of self-government". He said further:

"Although we are not likely to forget the deep agony caused by the occurrences of the Punjab and the events relating to the holy places, the Khilafat and Turkey, we should, while continuing our constitutional struggle, make a united effort to make the Reforms successful, as, on that will depend our future development."¹¹

An embodiment of communal harmony, Hakim Saheb took the opportunity from the League platform to propagate the ideas of Hindu-Muslim unity. He had been repeatedly preaching the gospel of love and so he expressed his conviction at Amritsar too that "the secret of the success, not merely of the Reforms scheme, but of all the work which is being done by Indians in India and abroad, has in Hindu-Muslim unity." Speaking on the importance of the subject, Hakim Ajmal Khan said further:

"... There is no need to look back as both these communities have now fully realized that unity alone can be the firm foundation of India's real improvement and future progress. Although war is rightly regarded as a calamity, the share the world war (now happily ended) has had in forging the links of unity between these two great communities, entitles us to say that the war has bequeathed India a legacy which is likely to prove the key to the success of

11. *ibid.*, p. 192.

the national self-realization of India. I must, however, confess that there are certain matters which at times came in the way of the full realization of this blessing. Those, who are inspired by a genuine desire to serve their country cannot be affected by any differences of race or creed, which are the same today as they were before.”¹²

Ajmal Khan always made sincere efforts to strengthen the bonds of unity between the two communities. He was alive to the fact that the Hindu community was greatly concerned for the protection of cows which the Muslims always looked to an animal for sacrifice. Many a riot had taken place in the past due to this animal, the sanctity of which the Hindus had always regarded as an article of faith. Hakim Saheb, therefore, wished that a solution should be found out so that the cows could be protected in the strict sense of the term. He, therefore, hoped that his co-religionists would come forward to respect the susceptibilities of their Hindu brethren and assist them in their efforts of protecting this sacred animal. In fact, Hakim Ajmal Khan wanted the Muslims to reciprocate the feelings of belongingness of the Hindus who had enthusiastically observed the Khilafat Day with them. “They cheerfully bore great commercial loss,” emphasised Hakim Saheb, “only to prove their sincere regard for our sentiments in regard to a matter which was exclusively religious, and could claim their interest in no other way.” He, therefore, suggested to the Muslims of India to respond their sentiments. They should thus, “in so far as it lies in their power, refrain from acts calculated to wound the susceptibilities of their compatriots.”¹³

While delivering this address to the Muslims of India Hakim Ajmal Khan profusely cited historical evidence to prove that cow was not the only animal, the sacrifice of which was incum-

12. *ibid.*, p. 192.

13. *ibid.*, pp. 193-4.

bent on the Muslims. Since it was a very delicate issue, he dealt with it in a little more details. Hakim Saheb said thus:

“...According to Islam, *qurbani* or sacrificial offering is a *Sunnat-i-Muwakkidah* (a practice observed by the Prophet and emphatically enjoined on his followers) which Mussalmans, as Mussalmans, so as they can afford it, must observe. Now it is a matter of choice to fulfil the observance by sacrificing camel, sheep, goat or cow, which simply means that any of these animals can be fit for offerings. Crores of Muslims must be strangers to the slaughter of a camel for the fulfilment of this observance; but none of them can possibly be accused of the slightest religious omission. On the contrary, Mussalmans of Arabia, Syria, Egypt, Tripoli and Asiatic Turkey have been faithful to this observance without ever having slaughtered a cow, and I am confident no erudite *Mufti* can maintain that these Mussalmans have failed to observe the *Sunnah* (practice of the Prophet) or have been guilty of any religious shortcoming. If any Mussalman dares to call a religiously legitimate act illegitimate, he certainly commits a sin.”¹⁴

Hakim Ajmal Khan did not ask the Muslims to refrain from sacrificing the cow only for appeasing the Hindus. In fact he recounted some of the religious traditions according to which the sacrifice of animals other than the cow was entitled to preference. For instance he quoted the Holy Prophet's remarkable wife Umm-i-Salmah that the Prophet once observed “if any of you see the crescent heralding the month of *Dilhaj** and desires to sacrifice a goat...” which obviously indicated that by tradition Arabs were in the habit of sacrificing goats. Quoting another saying of the Prophet that ‘of all sacrificial animals, the

14. *ibid.*, p. 194.

* The 10th of the twelfth month of the Islamic calendar is celebrated as the *Id-ul-Adha* when Muslims make sacrifice.

sheep was preferable', he proved that cow was not the only animal which should be offered for sacrifice. However Hakim Saheb did not go into the religious details of the issue which was, in fact, a domain of the doctors of theology but he made his views abundantly clear:

"...If having regard to all these circumstances, Mussalmans devoted their attention to this subject of their own accord and selected to sacrifice animals other than the cow, they would have the proud privilege of being regarded as the first to take the initial step towards ensuring the internal peace of the country, and they would in this way also be repaying the debt of gratitude, under which they have recently been laid by their Hindu compatriots."¹⁵

Making an appeal to his co-religionists Hakim Saheb said:

"...I earnestly appeal to my Muslim brothers, to consider calmly what I have said about this question, and if they arrive at the conclusion at which I have arrived, it will be upto them to show what value they attach to the great principle of unity, and what practical response they are ready to make (with particular reference to religious susceptibilities) to the forward step already taken by the Hindus in the direction of that goal."¹⁶

To speak out such frank and fearless convictions from the Muslim League forum was not at all an easy job. For the League was founded with a view to protect the rights of the Muslims and Hakim Saheb himself was its Vice-President. In fact, later he was the person responsible for bringing the League closer to the Congress. It was due to his efforts that the League had totally changed its shade. He wanted to change it further and therefore, put forth his suggestions in the following words:

15. *ibid.*, pp. 194-5.

16. *ibid.*, p. 195.

"I am also of opinion that unless some organised institution is entrusted with the propaganda, we must despair of any practical achievement in this respect. The Muslim League, of all the institutions, is by far the most suited for this purpose, and I hope it will offer itself for the sacred work and perform it with the wisdom and zeal which it deserves."¹⁷

Hakim Saheb hoped that the League would receive adequate and willing co-operation from the members of the Khilafat Committee. Since he had touched a very sensitive issue, Hakim Saheb was aware of its delicacy as is evident from the following remarks:

"...I trust that my views on this subject will evoke no adverse criticism from any quarter, but in view of the fact that the Muslim community, like all other communities of the world, is composed of men of varied ways of thinking, I shall not mind any onslaught for I am conscious that my humble suggestions ring from the depth of honesty and are not from any motive to please or annoy anyone."¹⁸

Hakim Saheb thus put forth sagaciously the suggestion most sensitive in nature for the preservation of the cow as a way out to remove misunderstandings that had been eroding the mutual trust. There were several suggestions for Hindu-Muslim unity that had been advanced by different parties from time to time. But it was for the first time that a Muslim political leader had the courage to put forward such a sensitive suggestion that too from the Muslim League platform.

Since Khilafat was the burning issue of the day it also found its mention in the presidential address. Tracing the history of

17. *ibid.*

18. *ibid.*, p. 196.

the Khilafat in detail, he narrated its genesis and growth till the world war I. As the Sultan of Turkey was the *Khalifa* of the Muslims of the world, Hakim Saheb wanted the Allies to preserve the sanctity of the Khilafat and not to dismember Turkey which had been the shield of Islam, having for centuries, shed Turkish blood in defence of Mussalmans in various battle fields and had, therefore, been 'specially endeared to Muslims of the world'. It was for this reason that the Muslim world was painfully and anxiously awaiting the last word of the Peace Conference in regard to the Ottoman Empire. Commenting on the British assurance he said that the Indian Muslims "relied on the assurance that the war between England and Turkey had nothing to do with religion, and regarded the ... announcement as a pledge that no attempt would be made to deprive Turkey of her custody of the holy places, and determined to help the British with men and money."¹⁹ Representing the feelings of the Indian Muslims Hakim Saheb said:

"... Giving our first thought to the allegiance we owed to the Crown, we not merely fought against the Turks, but offered all the pecuniary assistance we possibly could for the successful prosecution of the war. Mussalmans did not play so great a part in the European theatres of war, as in the battlefields of Syria and Mesopotamia. They fought shoulder to shoulder with the British Australian soldiers in the famous Dardanelles campaign against the Sultan of Turkey, in defence of the British crown, and took prominent part in the service which others were rendering to the Empire."²⁰

But the Muslims were shocked to find the situation in which Turkey was placed after the hostilities. The assurances and pledges of the British proved to be hallow and the victors en-

19. *ibid.*, p. 197.

20. *ibid.*, p. 198.

gaged themselves in tasting the fruits of their conquest. Hakim Saheb was shocked to find not a single Muslim representative at the Peace Conference for consultation before pronouncing opinion regarding the entire Muslim world. Presenting the Muslim viewpoint Hakim Saheb declared:

“...The Muslims will be satisfied only when independence (in the true sense of the term) is secured to the Arabs and other Turkish subjects by assigning Turkey the mandate to administer their provinces, subject to the supervision of the League of Nations not swayed by more than one vote of each country...The Mussalmans cannot be expected to forget that these lands have been the cradle of Islam, where the holy places are situated and where no non-Muslim can ever have even the semblance of the right of mandatory or any other rule...Trampling upon Muslim sentiments in this respect would mean creating not transitory but perennial unrest in the entire Muslim world, which would otherwise mean the deliberate awakening of unfriendly feelings in an otherwise unobtrusive people.”²¹

Although the British Government was bent upon dismembering the Ottoman Empire, Hakim Saheb acknowledged the services rendered to Islam by some of the high-souled Englishmen such as Mr. Marmaduke Pickthal, Capt. Aubrey Herbert, Sir Theodore Morrison, Professor E. G. Browne and C. F. Andrews who espoused the cause of Khilafat which was based on righteousness and justice.

Hakim Saheb fully endorsed and approved the act of the Indian Muslims who abstained from attending the peace celebrations in India. But he expressed his heartfelt gratefulness to the Hindu compatriots who equally shared the sorrows of the Muslims by keeping themselves away from the celebrations. In

21. *ibid.*, pp. 205-6.

the light of these fraternal feelings he hoped that the spirit which had achieved this result would continue to operate in the interest of preserving the impression created.

Concluding his presidential address the League President Hakim Ajmal Khan said thus:

“...I am aware that the exceptional nature of events now happening in the Muslim world has led me to dwell at length on topics of exclusively Muslim interests; but I have done so advisedly and in the confident hope that it cannot at this time of day lead any one to doubt the Muslims’ vivid consciousness of the solemn duty they owe to their motherland. As children of the soil, they know and fervently desire to fulfil their duty to the country of which they, in common with Hindus, Christians, Parsis and other communities, are the proud inheritors. They have, I can assure all concerned, realized to the full the solemn call of the motherland, and the sacred duty of patriotism. I am proud to declare that the time has come when the necessity for exhorting people to rise upto the highest standards of patriotism is rapidly diminishing; for the mysterious tide of human progress in pushing its sweep forward, and the humblest being is conscious of how to live and die for higher ideals. For India the unseen future holds a magnificence and splendour compared with which the most glorious grandeur of her past will be but small. Let all hands of men as well as of women join to unveil that vision.”²²

Thus spoke Hakim Ajmal Khan as the President of the Muslim League and left an undelible imprint upon the minds of the people at large. In fact, the loyalist of 1906 had become a rebel in 1919. The entire address and the speeches made by

22. *ibid.*, p. 214.

Hakim Saheb from time to time at the League session were marked with the critical tone. It was an agonising experience that had turned Hakim Saheb from a co-operator into a non-cooperator.

Although several resolutions were passed at the League session but the most important of these was the one that asked the Muslims of India to refrain from cow-slaughter as far as possible. The credit for all this goes to Hakim Ajmal Khan who had courageously broached this subject before his co-religionists.

Side by side the Central Khilafat Committee was also meeting at Amritsar under Shaukat Ali who alongwith his brother Mohammad Ali had just been released from the Chhindwara Jail and had come straight to preside over the deliberations of this organisation. Since the Committee owed its existence to the Khilafat issue itself, the session remained occupied with the detailed discussions on it. Among several decisions it took, there was one about sending a deputation to England to present the Muslim point of view on the subject. It also decided to raise an amount of ten lakh rupees towards the Khilafat fund. It was at this session that the leading Congressmen and the Khilafatists discussed the situation in the country and decided to organise their work in India. Hakim Ajmal Khan who had been the champion of the Khilafat cause participated in all important discussions of the Committee and enriched its debates with his wise counsels. In fact, a larger portion of his address as the League president was devoted to the cause of the Khilafat and the future of Turkey.

The *Jamiat-ul-Ulama* was hardly a month old at the time of its meeting at Amritsar. Some of the delegates were of the opinion that the *Ulama* should not have a separate organisation of their own but should join the Muslim League to activate it in a more systematic manner. But the founder-members including Hakim Ajmal Khan did not approve of this idea. As

a matter of fact Ajmal Khan was to a great extent responsible for bringing the *Ulama* out of their *Khanqahs* and persuaded them to come to the fold of politics. Here, in Amritsar he endorsed the decision that the *Ulama* should have a separate platform of their own and insisted on having a committee to frame its constitution. The *Jamiat* demanded that the Hindu-Muslim representatives should be nominated by the Government to the Peace Conference to enable them to present the Muslim view-point on the Khilafat issue. It further demanded an early release of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and *Shaikh-ul-Hind* Maulana Mahmud Hasan from jail. Maulana Azad was interned at Ranchi whereas the *Shaikh-ul-Hind* was exiled to Malta, an island in the Mediterranean sea. The former was freed on 1st January 1920, but the latter could return to India only after sometime. Since Hakim Ajmal Khan had very close relations with Maulana Mahmud Hasan, he was very keen on his release and had pleaded for this with the Government on a number of occasions.

Hakim Ajmal Khan also attended the session of the Indian National Congress, which assembled under the presidentship of Motilal Nehru. In fact, Hakim Saheb was "lustily cheered and garlanded" at the Congress session where he supported the proposition for presidency of the Congress and said that there could be no better choice than that of Pt. Motilal Nehru.

In his presidential address, Motilal Nehru recounted the entire political situation as it stood at the time of the session. He condemned the brutal acts of the O'Dwyers' administration and observed that Sir Michael had tried to make the Punjab a kind of Ulster in relation to the rest of India, "a bulwark of reaction against the reforms." His comments on the Khilafat question were bold and he based his support on the ground that it was impossible for one part of the Indian people to stand aloof while the other part was suffering under a serious grievance. This was clearly shown, he added, when the vast majority

of non-Muslims in India made common cause with the Muslims and abstained from participating in the recent peace celebrations. Apart from the promises and pledges given to the Muslims they had a right to demand the application of the principle of self-determination to the component parts of the Turkish empire in the same way as it had been applied to other countries in Europe like Poland and Yugoslavia. Finally, the session reverberated with the demand for full responsible government for India. Several points that had been touched by Motilal Nehru in his presidential address were also discussed in Hakim Saheb's own address. In fact, Hakim Ajmal Khan and Motilal Nehru had been old friends and both of them were received at Amritsar with great respect. Their presence in the city enthused the people as both were the preachers of the gospel of love and unity. "It was a sign of times" writes B.R. Nanda, "that Motilal and Ajmal Khan together visited and offered prayers at the Golden Temple, the holy shrine of the Sikhs."²³

Amritsar was known for the communal peace and amity and it is no wonder that it brought several organisations into one line of thought and action. Having observed a massive upsurge of unity and fraternity among the various communities, Gandhiji felt impelled to remark: "Plassey laid the foundation of the British Empire, Amritsar has shaken it."²⁴

23. B. R. Nanda, *The Nehrus*, Delhi, 1969, p. 171.

24. Durgadas, *India from Curzon to Nehru and After*, London, 1969, p. 71.

VI

The Non-Cooperator

THE YEAR 1920 was a period of pressures and tensions for Hakim Ajmal Khan. Following the Amritsar session of the national organisations, he remained engrossed in finding a way out for the redress of Punjab and Khilafat wrongs. During the first three weeks of January he remained in constant touch with the national leaders like Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Mahatma Gandhi and Lokmanya Tilak. It was, however, finally decided that a deputation should wait on the Viceroy with a memoranda for an early solution of the Khilafat issue. Both Hakim Saheb and Maulana Azad signed it, whereas the former agreed to join the deputation, the latter declined to be included in it, since he felt the situation had gone beyond the stage of presenting petitions and needed some more concrete steps.

However, the deputation waited on the Viceroy on 19th January 1920 under the leadership of Dr. M. A. Ansari and impressed upon him the necessity for the preservation of the Turkish Empire and also the sovereignty of the Sultan as Caliph. They put forward their demand in unequivocal terms that "the continued existence of the Khilafat as a temporal no less than spiritual institution was the very essence of their faith." The deputation was disappointed at the Viceroy's response. "Turkey", the Viceroy said "cannot expect any more than any other power which drew the sword of Germany wholly to escape the consequences of her action." The Viceroy, thus, did not commit himself to anything except offering facilities, if a deputation was to visit England to put forth the Muslim view-

point before the British Premier. The Muslim leaders thereupon issued a statement expressing their conviction that "should the peace terms result unfavourably to Muslim religion and sentiments, they would place an undue strain upon Muslim loyalty" and demanding that "Arabia as delimited by Muslim authority, and the Holy places of Islam must remain under the control of the Caliph" and that the pledge given by the British Prime Minister should be fulfilled.

In compliance with a resolution of the Khilafat Committee Maulana Mohammad Ali along with Syed Sulaiman Nadvi and Dr. Syed Hossain went to England in February 1920 but returned disappointed in October. In reply to Maulana's demand that the Turkish Caliph must remain in possession of *Jazirat-al-Arab*, including Iraq, Syria and Palestine with all the holy places situated therein, Lloyd George, the then Prime Minister, said that the Arabs could not be deprived of the freedom which they had won for themselves. He did not give any definite assurance that even Turkish lands would be left intact with the Turks. In fact he himself had encouraged the Greeks to occupy Smyrna. The deputation thereafter suggested a kind of federation of the Turkish and Arab lands under the Caliph, but to this Lloyd George replied that it would be possible only when these countries were given their freedom. Lloyd George categorically told the deputationists that neither he nor any other European statesman would support any move which allowed the Caliph to perpetuate his tyrannical rule. The countries wanted to be free from his bondage and the entire civilised world supported this demand. The deputationists had no answer to this and they returned home empty-handed.

Maulana Azad was therefore, justified in not joining the deputation. He was of the opinion that "these methods of begging, partitioning, waiting in deputation could not be of much avail. We had to try to find some means of exerting direct pressure." This direct pressure could not be anything other than

non-cooperation. As regards the origin of non-cooperation, there are different versions. G. D. Tendulkar has given a vivid account of the emergence of the non-cooperation programme in his book entitled *Mahatma*. Maulana Azad is reported to have said therein:

“The matter was discussed for six long hours in Hakim Ajmal Khan’s drawing room but without any result. Gandhiji thereupon proposed that a sub-committee of two or three people should be appointed to decide the matter in consultation with him. Their decision would then be placed before the bigger committee. Hakim Ajmal Khan Saheb and I were selected to form this sub-committee. We accompanied Gandhiji to principal Rudra’s house and were closeted with him for three hours. It was here that non-cooperation was conceived. Gandhiji placed before us a detailed programme and I had no difficulty in agreeing with him in every detail. Next day members of the deputation met again and Gandhiji explained to them his proposal. There was still hesitancy on the part of Maulana Abdul Bari. Mohammad Ali and Shaukat Ali could not make up their minds and wanted time. Hakim Saheb however, gave me his full support.”¹

In his autobiography *India Wins Freedom* Maulana Azad, however, gives an account of the origin of the non-cooperation a little differently. He says:

“A meeting of the Khilafat was held on 20 January, 1920 at Delhi in which non-cooperation programme was discussed and decided... Mr. Mohammad Ali and Shaukat Ali, Hakim Ajmal Khan and Maulvi Abdul Bari of Firangi

1. G. D. Tendulkar, *Mahatma: The Life of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. I. Bombay, 1951, p. 343.

Mahal, Lucknow, were also present. Gandhiji presented his programme of non-cooperation... As soon as Gandhiji described his proposal I remembered that this was the programme which Tolstoy had outlined many years ago... Others reacted according to their backgrounds. Hakim Ajmal Khan said that he wanted some time to consider the proposal. He would not like to advise others till he was willing to accept the programme himself. Maulana Abdul Bari said that Gandhiji's suggestions raised fundamental issues and he could not give a reply till he had meditated and sought divine guidance. Mohammad Ali and Shaukat Ali said they would wait till Maulana Abdul Bari's decision was known. Gandhiji then turned to me. I said without a moment's hesitation. 'I fully accept the programme.'²

Referring to the above two different versions of Maulana Azad, in his *Pathway to Pakistan* Choudhry Khaliquz Zaman makes the following comment:

"The story given in his autobiography materially differs from the story given by him as quoted earlier, particularly in regard to the part played by the venerable personality of Hakim Ajmal Khan and the appointment of a sub-committee without the Ali Brothers."³

Whatever be the fact, two things are clear regarding the origin of the non-cooperation idea. First, the idea of the non-cooperation dawned upon Mahatma Gandhi only after the failure of the deputation that waited on the Viceroy Lord Chelmsford on 19 January, 1920. Secondly, whether Hakim Ajmal Khan

2. Abul Kalam Azad, *India Wins Freedom*, Orient Longman, 1959, pp. 8-9.

3. Chaudhry Khaliquz Zaman, *Pathway to Pakistan*, Lahore, 1961, p. 53.

agreed or not to the idea of non-cooperation, he was present as a participant in the parleys that took place among the national leaders including Mahatma Gandhi and Maulana Azad to chalk out the programme of non-cooperation. However, the future events bear testimony to the fact that Hakim Saheb fully subscribed to the views of Gandhiji and gave unconditional support to his programme. Thus, in a way, he shared the credit of being one of the co-founders of the non-cooperation.

A few weeks later at a Khilafat Conference in Meerut, Maulana Azad and Mahatma Gandhi announced the programme of action to the delegates and through them to the nation. Now onwards, Khilafat Conferences became a regular feature of India's political life. These were held all over the country to mobilise public opinion and thus impart strength to the movement. To make it more acceptable to Muslims, Maulana Azad, as president of the Provincial Khilafat Conference at Calcutta on 20th February 1920, gave it a religious interpretation and told the Muslims to remember that such a movement had the sanction of the *Shariat*. To give it a practical and concrete shape the Central Khilafat Committee decided to fix a day for the observance of the Khilafat Day throughout the country. Consequently 19th March 1920 was observed as the *Khilafat Day* everywhere with great solemnity. On this day Hakim Ajmal Khan enjoyed the unique distinction of initiating and inaugurating the Khilafat non-cooperation programme by returning to the Viceroy the *Kaiser-i-Hind* Gold Medal, two coronation silver medals and the title *Haziq-ul-Mulk* which were awarded to him earlier in recognition of his meritorious public services as a physician.

Addressing a letter to the Deputy Commissioner, Hakim Saheb wrote:

"It is not known to you how quiet and patient the Indian Muhammedans have been throughout the period of the war and inspite of the heart rending and sometimes provoking

incidents connected with the Ottoman Empire which have been taking place ever since the termination of the war, they have not made themselves responsible for the slightest act of violence in any part of the country. On the other hand they have, during the war fought for the British Government in the Dardanelles, Syria, Mesopotamia and other parts of the Ottoman Empire. They believe that their holy places would remain safe as they had been promised but in reality not one of them is in their hands, for even Mecca, the holiest of all the Muslim holy places and Medina, where our holy Prophet is buried, are not in their real sense, under Shariff Husain. Jerusalem has been wrested from the Mussalmans and is being given to Jews. All the holy places of Iraq-Arabia are directly under the British Government and the remaining portion of the *Jazirat-ul-Arab* is to a great extent under their domination. The solemn pledges held out regarding Constantinople and Thrace so far from being redeemed seem to be honoured in the breach, for the British and the Allied forces have actually occupied the seat of Khilafat and it is proposed that it should remain under the Allied guns. The Mussalmans of this country have adopted all the constitutional means that they could think of in order to bring to the notice of the British Government their just demand but no heed has been paid to their rights; and even the minimum of their requests has not been acceded to. In these circumstances as an humble Mussalman I have decided to relieve myself of all the honours conferred upon me by the Government and I return herewith the gold medal of *Kaiser-i-Hind* together with the two silver medals of the Coronation Durbars of England and India and hence forward I give up the title of *Haziq-ul-Mulk*.

I hope you will be so good as to forward this letter together with the medals to the head of the local government

and ask him to remove my name from the list of Darbaris . . . ”⁴

In fact he was the third awardee in his family of the title *Haziq-ul-Mulk* the other two being Hakim Akmal Khan and his own elder brother Hakim Abdul Majeed Khan. Still he was first in his family to relinquish it. The grateful nation, however, soon conferred on him another title *Masih-ul-Mulk* which ultimately became an inseparable part of his name. In the latter life Hakim Saheb was identified with this title only.

Hakim Ajmal Khan was followed by many others who relinquished their titles and returned to the British all those honours that had been conferred on them from time to time. The non-cooperation movement stirred the psyche of the Muslims, and hardly any section of the Muslim community remained untouched by the religious fervour of the movement. The *Ulama*, who, so far had preferred to stay away from the active politics also came forward to spearhead this movement. What was, however, remarkable about this movement was that the Hindus identified themselves completely with the cause of their Muslim brethren.

To strengthen the movement a *fatwa* or religious injunction was issued by the *Ulama* to undertake *Hijrat*. According to Islam it was a religious duty of the Muslims to wage war against the British. If they were unable to wage this war called *Jihad*, then *Hijrat* was considered as the only way open to them. It meant migration to some other country which was *Dar-ul-Islam*, a place of peace. Since it was not possible for the Muslims to wage war against the British in India, *Hijrat*, was therefore, thought of as an escape from the perpetual pain of living in *Dar-ul-Harb*, the land of the enemies. Soon after Amir Amanullah of Afghanistan also invited the oppressed Muslims to come

4. Foreign & Pol. Deptt. Internal-13, Pros. October 1920, No. 70/74, Delhi Archives.

to Kabul and settle there. Consequently in compliance with the *Fatwa* issued by religious divines and invitation extended by the Amir of Afghanistan nearly 20,000 Muslims left India for Kabul. Sind was the first to start this movement. On reaching the Afghan borders these *Muhajirs* as they were called then, found that the Government of that country was not at all prepared to allow the inflow of such a large number of Muslims. It, therefore, restricted their entry into Afghanistan. As a result of this policy, the Indian emigrants were ill-treated and thousands of them died on the way.

In fact Hakim Ajmal Khan considered *Hijrat* as an ill-advised act and an outcome of religious orthodoxy. In his view it negated the very concept of patriotism and love for one's own country. It was his firm conviction that the war for liberation of the country should be fought on its own soil only. In his opinion, wherever they went, the slave people of a country would always be considered as slaves until the time they get their motherland freed from the shackles of slavery. Finding the situation worsening, Hakim Saheb himself requested the Amir of Afghanistan to get this discontinued and discouraged. The Muslims too slackened their exodus from their own country.

On 15 May, 1920 the terms of the Turkish Peace Treaty negotiated at Sevres were made known to the public. Their harshness made the Central Khilafat Committee announce the decision to resort to non-violent non-cooperation at Bombay on 28th May. In order to allay the fears of the Hindus a statement was also issued which assured that "the Muslims of India will fight to the last man in resisting any Mussalman power that may have designs upon India." On 9 June 1920 the Khilafat Committee enunciated the following four stages of non-cooperation:

- i) surrender of titles and honorary positions:

- ii) resignation of posts in the civil services of the Government;
- iii) resignation from the police and army;
- iv) refusal to pay taxes.

All through these days Ajmal Khan remained busy in mobilising public opinion in favour of the movement which ultimately started on 1 August, 1920. Unfortunately Lokmanya Tilak expired on this day, of course, after giving his blessings to the movement.

The humiliation of the Muslim world was complete with the signing of the Treaty of Sevres in August 1920. By this treaty the Arab State of Hejaz was nominally freed and put under British control. Armenia was created into a Christian Republic and was kept under an international guarantee. Mesopotamia, Transjordan, Syria and Palestine were snatched away from Turkey. Syria was put under the French, whereas Palestine, Mesopotamia and Transjordan were surrendered to England under the mandate of the League of Nations. Galacia and South Anatolia were recognised as the French and Italian spheres of influence respectively. Adrianople, Gallipole, the Islands of Ambros and Tenedos, Smyrna and the territory on the coast of Asia Minor were given away to Greece. Turkey was asked to pay a huge war indemnity also.

The treaty was indeed a harsh one. It effected the dismemberment of *Khilafat*. The Indian Muslims felt humiliated and thought that the only alternative left for them was to intensify the non-cooperation movement. A special session of the Congress was, therefore, convened at Calcutta on 4 September 1920 under Lala Lajpat Rai to chalk out the details of the movement. Keeping the developments in view Gandhiji declared the achievement of Swaraj as the final goal. Thus nationalism and Khilafatism in the words of W.C. Smith were "now organically related, as the avowed twin objects of the entire coun-

try". Gandhiji moved his historic resolution on the adoption of "progressive non-violent non-cooperation" and proposed the detailed programme which included the following seven items:⁵

- i) surrender of titles and honorary offices and resignation from nominated seats in local bodies;
- ii) refusal to attend government levees, durbars and other official and semi-official functions;
- iii) gradual withdrawal of children from schools and colleges owned, aided or controlled by government and in place of such schools and colleges, the establishment of national institutions;
- iv) gradual boycott of British courts by lawyers and litigants and the establishment of private Arbitration Courts for the settlement of disputes;
- v) refusal on the part of military, clerical and labouring classes to offer themselves as recruits for services in Mesopotamia;
- vi) withdrawal by candidates of their candidature for election to the Reforms Councils, and refusal on the part of voters to vote for any candidate who may, despite the Congress advice, offered himself for election;
- vii) boycott of foreign goods.

It was an elaborately detailed scheme covering varied aspects of public activity. It was, in essence, the same programme as had been enunciated and adopted earlier by the Khilafatists. In fact, this resolution moved by Gandhiji was an open departure from the traditional constitutional path. M.A. Jinnah did not approve of the practicability of the programme and called upon the leaders to reconsider the scheme in all its aspects. But Gandhiji and Hakim Ajmal Khan were of the opinion that the Khilafat and Punjab wrongs could be re-

5. *The Indian National Congress, 1920-1923*, Allahabad, 1924, pp. 6-9.

ressed only by non-cooperating with the British in all important spheres of political, social, economic and educational life. All the Muslim members of the Subjects Committee except M.A. Jinnah, wholeheartedly supported the resolution. Hence it was carried out by 1886 as against 884 votes. Lala Lajpat Rai, the President of the session, declared that "...at present, the lead in the non-cooperation programme must come from the Muhammedans who must be prepared to give a lead to the country, not only in principle but in enforcing it."⁶ Consequently the Muslim League also agreed to lend its support to the Congress programme even though Jinnah had opposed it.

Hakim Ajmal Khan stayed in Calcutta throughout the session exchanging views with the national leaders and mobilising support for the non-cooperation programme from all quarters. As the sessions of the League, *Jamiat-ul-Ulama* and the Khilafat Committee were also taking place in Calcutta simultaneously, Hakim Saheb served as a link between them. He was most satisfied with the deliberations of the Calcutta Congress session which had given green signal to Gandhiji to go ahead with his programme. On returning from Calcutta he issued a press statement at Delhi. It ran thus:

"This determination of the leaders that they would abide by the decisions of the Congress stands a guarantee to the fact that the group of nationalists would always remain united. Mr. C. R. Das, Mr. Patel, Mr. Pal, Sir Asutosh Chaudhry and all those friends who were present at the AICC meeting gave a proof of truthfulness, far-sightness and patriotism by expressing their willingness to practise the resolution accepted by the Congress. The formation of a Committee with Mr. Patel, Pandit Motilal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi as members for framing the rules for giving practical shape to the non-cooperation

6. *Report, Indian National Congress*, 1920, p. 41.

scheme in itself is a very wise step. The Anglo-Indian people would have received a shock by finding the nationalists united since they expected them to be disunited and divided. The rest of the country, however, would be elated at the idea that their leaders had, at long last, made themselves prepared to struggle for themselves the freedom of conscience individual liberty and complete *swaraj*.”⁷

Hakim Saheb later undertook a tour of the country along with other leaders to educate public opinion in favour of the non-cooperation programme. Suddenly there erupted communal violence in different parts of the country which distracted his attention and he engaged himself in organising peace missions throughout this period. Communal riot took a severe turn in Agra. Hakim Saheb, therefore, immediately rushed to Agra and stayed there till the situation returned to normal. Describing this incident Mahatma Gandhi gave his observation in *Young India*. He wrote :⁸

“A severe strain was put upon it in Agra and it has been stated that when either party went to the authorities they were referred to Maulana Shaukat Ali and me. Fortunately, there was a far better man at hand. Hakimji Ajmal Khan is a devout Muslim who commands the confidence and respect of both the parties. He, with his band of workers, hastened to Agra, settled the dispute and the parties became friends as they never were before. An incident occurred nearer Delhi and the same influence worked there also successfully avoiding what otherwise might have proved as explosion.”

Referring to the incident at another place Mahatma Gandhi remarked : “. . . Maulana or Gandhi did not have to go, but the well-known Hakim Ajmal Khan and others went

7. Qazi Mohd. Abdul Ghaffar, *Hayat-i-Ajmal*, Aligarh, 1950, p. 230.

8. *Young India*, 6 October, 1920.

there from Delhi and restored peace between the two communities. The people were convinced that they could do without the services of the army and the officials.”⁹

Exhorting the people to maintain fraternal relations Gandhiji later wrote :

“But Hakimji Ajmal Khan cannot be everywhere appearing at the exact hour as an angel of peace. Nor can Maulana Shaukat Ali or I go everywhere. And yet perfect peace must be observed between the two communities inspite of attempts to divide them . . . We must learn at such times to do without an appeal to the Government. Hakimji Ajmal Khan has shown us how to do it.”¹⁰

During this very period Hakim Ajmal Khan, with a view to boost the non-cooperation programme, concentrated on giving it a practical shape in the educational sphere. His relentless efforts were crowned with success and culminated in the founding of the National Muslim University at Aligarh known as Jamia Millia Islamia on 29 October, 1920. The boys who formed the Jamia were originally the students of Muhammedan Anglo-Oriental College of Aligarh. Hakim Saheb was appointed its first Chancellor which post he held throughout his life. The Jamia made Hakim Saheb more preoccupied as he had to move frequently between Aligarh and Delhi to look after the institution. This practice went on for quite some years, till he shifted the Jamia from Aligarh to Delhi where it could get his constant attention. He alone was responsible for mobilising funds for the Jamia and it is a fact that, had he not looked after it, the institution would have collapsed long back. However, it is mainly for his ceaseless efforts that the Jamia survived and was elevated to the status of a deemed-to-be University in free India.

9. *ibid.*

10. *ibid.*

In November 1920 Hakim Saheb spoke from the *Jamiat-ul-Ulama's* platform at its Delhi session as Chairman of the Reception Committee and explained the meaning of non-cooperation and boycott of foreign goods. The session was presided over by *Shaikh-ul-Hind* Maulana Mahmud Hasan who had returned to India after his release from Malta. It was the *Shaikh-ul-Hind* who had laid the foundation of Jamia Millia Islamia at Aligarh and thereafter returned to Delhi to preside over the *Jamiat*. It was the last function that he attended in his life time. Soon after the session was over, he fell seriously ill and expired. In fact the rigours of prison life had made him very feeble. His death greatly shocked Hakim Saheb as he had pinned great hopes on the Maulana who had promised all support to the non-cooperation programme.

The non-cooperation again came up for discussion at the annual session of Indian National Congress at Nagpur in December 1920. Pattabhi Sitaramayya rightly comments that "the number of delegates who attended the Congress was immense, and no Congress before or after Nagpur can claim to its credit as many delegates as did Nagpur." Their number was 14,582 of whom no less than 1,050 were Muslims and 169 women. It was presided over by C. Vijiaraghavachariar of Salem. The Labour Party of England had also deputed its delegates to attend the Congress session.

Mahatma Gandhi's main resolution was carried out with an overwhelming majority. According to Dr. Ansari, Hakim Ajmal Khan was also enlisted to support the resolution along with C. R. Das and Motilal Nehru but he advised Mahatma Gandhi to have it supported only by the non-Muslim leaders which was sure to create a deeper and greater impact upon the people. Hakim Saheb's advice not to support the resolution from the Congress platform was also owing to the fact that he was to move the same resolution from the League platform

which was meeting simultaneously with the Congress at Nagpur under the presidentship of Dr. M. A. Ansari.

Keeping pace with the Indian National Congress, Hakim Ajmal Khan moved the following resolution at the session of All India Muslim League :

- “(a) The All India Muslim League affirms the resolution passed at its special session in Calcutta regarding non-violent non-cooperation.
- (b) The League places on record its satisfaction at the progress the non-cooperation movement has made generally and in particular at the boycott of the Councils by the nationalists and at the refusal to exercise their right of voting by the vast majority of the electors of the various constituencies established under the Reforms Scheme; and in direct opposition to the will of the electors, to resign their seats; and in the case of those who fail to do so, the League advises the electors to have no political connection whatsoever with the so-called representatives.
- (c) The League also expresses its sense of appreciation for the purpose made to the call of duty by the youth of India; and while emphasising the absolute necessity of the immediate severance of all connections with Government or Government-aided Colleges and Schools, calls upon the owners and trustees of all the educational institutions to forthwith give up Government aid and disaffiliate themselves from Government recognised universities; and the League, at the same time, requests parents and guardians to withdraw their sons and wards from Government-aided or controlled institutions without any further delay; and it also calls upon adult students to withdraw from such institutions;

- (d) The League further urges the lawyers and the litigants to immediately boycott Government courts to establish, encourage and popularise arbitration courts.
- (e) Lastly the League exhorts the people of India to encourage Indian industries by the exclusive use of *Swadeshi* goods and by establishing home industries.”¹¹

This resolution was seconded by Tasadduq Ahmed Khan Sherwani and supported by Maulana Subhani and Maulvi Shamsuddin Ahmed. It included almost all those points that had been put forth by the Congress resolution.

Hakim Ajmal Khan also supported the resolution of the League that amended its constitution. According to this amendment the following were declared as the objects of the League:

- “(a) To attain *Swaraj* through peaceful and legitimate means;
- (b) to protect and advance the political, religious and other rights and interests of the Indian Mussalmans;
- (c) to promote friendship and union between the Mussalmans and other communities of India;
- (d) to maintain and strengthen brotherly relations between the Mussalmans of India and those of other countries.”¹²

Thus while Hakim Ajmal Khan in 1906 (seconding the resolution for the formation of Muslim League) had pledged to promote the feelings of loyalty towards the British Government was now no more submissive and weak but had raised

11. *Indian Annual Register*, 1920-21, pp. 102-3.

12. *ibid.*

himself to the stature of a national leader in 1920 and was instrumental in getting the objects of the League changed altogether. Again he was responsible at this session for the passage of the resolution exhorting the Indian Muslims to continue unabated their earnest efforts to protect the cow. This resolution was moved to enliven the spirit of the Amritsar session of the League when the Muslims were called upon to refrain from sacrificing the cow and thereby strengthening the noble cause of Hindu-Muslim unity. He expressed same feelings from the Khilafat platform when Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was presiding over the deliberations.

The non-cooperation programme had two aspects, constructive and destructive. For the fulfilment of the constructive aspects the Congress decided to collect an amount of one crore rupees in the name of the *Tilak-Swaraj* Fund. In fact it was to be spent over the non-cooperation activities of the participants. It was meant for the enrolment of one crore volunteers, for rendering assistance in the promotion of social, educational, legal and economic boycott and for distributing lakhs of spinning wheels among the unemployed who could thus earn their livelihood by boycotting the foreign cloth. Hakim Ajmal Khan took upon himself the responsibility of collecting this fund in Delhi and from various other places to which he had an easy access.

The spirit of non-cooperation profoundly stirred the country and an unprecedented wave of enthusiasm ran through India's teeming millions. Unparalleled scenes of fervour, devotion and sacrifice were witnessed everywhere. In the words of Dr. Tarachand, "from the first of August 1920 when it started to 6th February, 1922 when it was suspended the non-cooperation campaign moved in crescendo."¹³

13. Tarachand, *History of the Freedom Movement*, Vol. III, New Delhi, 1972, p. 494.

The beginning of 1921 witnessed Hakim Ajmal Khan getting the newly constructed building of the Tibbia College inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi. It could also be termed as a step forward in the direction of non-cooperation. Originally when Hakim Saheb had envisaged the plan the Viceroy Lord Hardinge had been invited to lay the foundation stone for it, but now that non-cooperation was the order of the day and Hakim Saheb had fully aligned himself to national politics no other person would have been more suitable for the opening ceremony of the new buildings than Mahatma Gandhi.

Following the adoption of non-cooperation programme the Muslim leaders made it a part of daily political activities to preach among the Muslim masses disaffection against the British government. They convened meetings to criticise the government for its anti-people activities. One such historic gathering was the Khilafat Conference which met at Karachi in July 1921 under Maulana Mohammad Ali who had returned from England only to report the failure of his mission. Among other resolutions passed by the Conference the one which was considered most dangerous by the Government concerned with the Muslim disaffiliation from the British army. It proclaimed that "it is in every way religiously unlawful for a Mussalman at the present moment to continue in the British army or to induce others to join the army and it is the duty of all the Mussalmans in general and the *Ulama* in particular to see that these religious commandments are brought home to every Mussalman in the army." It further announced that "if the British Government chooses to take any military measures against the Angora (Ankara or Turkish) government, directly or indirectly, openly or secretly, then the Mussalmans of India will be compelled to commence the breaking of laws, that is civil disobedience, with the concurrence of the Congress and proclaim complete independence of India."¹⁴

14. *The Indian Annual Register*, 1922, pp. 172-4.

This resolution was moved by Maulana Husain Ahmed Madani, the able successor of *Shaikh-ul-Hind* Maulana Mahmud Hasan. In a *fatwa* or religious decree it was made incumbent upon every Muslim not to serve in the army since it was unreligious for him to do so. Maulana Mohammad Ali's fiery speech further added fuel to fire. The government felt unnerved and issued a press note in September 1921 for the arrest of Ali Brothers under Sections 120-B and 105 and 505 of the Indian Penal Code. Alongwith Ali Brothers the government arrested *Shaikh-ul-Islam* Maulana Husain Ahmed Madani, Nisar Ahmed Khanpuri, Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew, Pir Ghulam Mujaddadi Sindhi and *Jagadguru* Shankaracharya, all of whom were tried for the same offence and sent to jail for various periods.

The Karachi case, as it was called then, electrified the masses. The country rose as one man to agitate against the arrest of these leaders. The Congress leaders issued a manifesto on 4 October, 1921 and supported Mohammad Ali's move and considered it "the duty of every Indian soldier and civilian to sever his connection with the Government and find some other means of livelihood." The manifesto was signed by all the important Hindu and Muslim leaders including Hakim Ajmal Khan. Hakim Saheb declared that the Khilafat leaders had not committed any offence by asking the people not to remain associated with the army. In fact by doing so they had fulfilled their religious duty. Thereafter Hakim Saheb always spoke in defence of the interned leaders of the Karachi case. He challenged the government that, if it had courage, it should arrest all those leaders who had signed the manifesto. In one of the press statements, Hakim Saheb said :¹⁵

"The Indian Government wishes to put a check on the wave for the liberation of the country which is spreading

15. Qazi Mohd. Abdul Ghaffar, *op, cit.*, pp. 250-1.

every day in India due to the acts of oppression and suppression. The people of India are restlessly waiting for the future . . . The present movement has given rise to a horrible tempest in the political ocean of India and non-violence is such a vigorous force that all the powers of the material world collected together cannot face it. The lovers of liberty are making sacrifices for the sake of India and country under the intoxication of wine of non-cooperation. They have been hearing the agonies with great patience and fortitude and therefore consider it to be the key to their success. The leaders of the nation have been put behind the bars. Thus there was only one way left to the people of the country that, inspite of the oppression and suppression, they should behave strictly in accordance with the tenets of non-violent non-cooperation."

Concluding the statement he gave a clarion call to all :

"O! the brethren of my country, keep on fighting the war of independence and abide by the ways of non-violent non-cooperation. Do your duty and leave the rest to God the Almighty as it is ultimately He Who is the Master and Maker of us all."

Meanwhile there occurred in Malabar a tragedy generally known as the Moplah rebellion. Numerous meetings were held in the Southern part of India — now known as Kerala where the resolutions of the Karachi Khilafat Conference were repeatedly endorsed. The messages of non-violent non-cooperation and *Swaraj* were also repeated, but the concept of non-violence had little attraction for the Moplahs who were the descendants of the early Arab settlers on the southern coast of India. In fact, the trouble started when the police assaulted certain Moplah leaders who had arms in their possession. Consequently the Moplahs turned rebellious and became violent. They blocked the roads, cut the telegraph lines and breached

the railway lines. On the collapse of British administration, Moplahs declared the establishment of *Swaraj* as complete. Some of the Hindus of the region also became victims of the atrocious acts of the Moplahs, which the British took advantage of and turned it into a communal strife. The Hindus were thus stirred up against the Muslims and the press published exaggerated accounts of the so-called forcible conversion of the Hindus. It was all in accordance with the British Government's wishes for whom a joint Hindu-Muslim rebellion would have been ruinous. Hakim Ajmal Khan was much disturbed by the turn of events in Malabar. He hailed the Moplahs as brave people but condemned the misdeeds of a handful of those who forcibly converted the Hindus to the fold of Islam. He, however, rightly laid the blame at the Government's door who not only fanned communal feelings among the two communities but also prompted the press in publishing exaggerated accounts of the happenings in the region. He held the Government solely responsible for the uprising also because of the fact that it had not allowed the national leaders to enter into Malabar to preach the efficacy of non-violence. Evidently he had a soft corner for the innocent Moplahs and for years financed the schooling and other needs of the children of those Moplahs who had become a victim to the British skull duggery.

The Hindu Mahasabha held its annual session at Delhi in the beginning of November 1921. As Hakim Ajmal Khan was respected both by the Hindus and Muslims alike the Mahasabha elected him Chairman of the Reception Committee. It was for the first and the last time in the history of the Mahasabha that a Muslim leader had been accorded such an honour for the organisation was known for its anti-Muslim ideology. Hakim Saheb took advantage of the honour shown to him by the Mahasabha and preached from its platform the gospel of communal unity and love. Throughout his welcome

address Hakim Saheb quoted extensively from Indian history to highlight the contribution made by the Muslim rulers towards the establishment of a secular India. He presented the instances from history as to how and when these rulers issued the royal *firman*s prohibiting the sacrifice of the cow. On the other hand, it was during the British rule that countless cows were being used for the British armed forces. He thus used his position to advantage, for spreading the message of communal love and harmony.

The last days of 1921 were pregnant with various activities. The viceroy was making ceaseless efforts to prove to the Prince of Wales that India had returned to normalcy. The Gandhi-Reading meeting failed as the conditions put forth by the Viceroy were not acceptable to Mahatma Gandhi. The Moderate leadership of the country also failed in making the national leaders accept these conditions. It led the Government to intensify its suppressive and aggressive measures. In fact the Viceroy had assured the Indian leaders that he would call a Round Table Conference and himself would, on behalf of the British Government, concede full provincial autonomy and also that discussions might be held on how further power could be transferred at the Centre. Mahatma Gandhi turned down the proposal which, in Hakim Ajmal Khan's opinion, halted the way for negotiations. Hakim Saheb wanted Gandhiji not to tie up the proposed Round Table Conference with conditions. He was of the view that the Round Table Conference should have been agreed to and then the fight for the fulfilment of demands should have been fought through it. However, the parleys failed and the atmosphere became tense. Almost all the national leaders were in jail and Government had ordered its police to unleash a reign of terror.

In such a situation Hakim Ajmal Khan released the fol-

lowing statement to the press :¹⁶

“The policy pursued by the Government in regard to the national movement has no more remained a secret now. Our leaders who had been leading these movements peacefully and keeping the masses under control have been put behind the bars. It has created a new situation and thus we consider it our duty to make the Muslims and other workers aware of their foremost duty. We all know that human nature cannot but be affected by outward situation and condition. It is, therefore, necessary that a set of rules and regulations should be strictly followed with a complete system which could keep the people under control . . . Sentiments should not be let loose to overpower reason and, if we keep our instincts under spiritual control, we are sure to succeed. In fact, the recent events have put human emotions to a state of hard test.”

Under such circumstances it was felt necessary that the leaders who were out of prison should do their utmost to maintain peace in the country so that the masses may not lose patience and turn violent. Hakim Ajmal Khan, therefore, in another statement made the following appeal to the Muslims :

“They should always keep the purity of their object in view, and refrain from being the cause of violence or riot. The Muslims of India have promised Mahatma Gandhi that they would abide by the peaceful non-violent movement. Thus we should keep our word . . . Like their Hindu brethren the Muslims should also patiently and determinedly tolerate the hardships of the Government. The Khilafat movement has awakened the whole of India. The Muslims should, therefore, remain in the forefront of the struggle for *Swaraj*. And this is possible

16. *ibid.*, p. 253.

only when they practise the non-cooperation programme with complete peace and patience despite all provocations. And when the Khilafat movement becomes successful and we achieve the goal of *Swaraj*, the name of the Muslims would shine on the pages of history as saviours of liberty and conscience and the freedom of the country from destruction.”¹⁷

It was with such relentless efforts that Hakim Saheb could keep his co-religionists calm and quiet. However, inspired by such a lofty ideal and in a tense situation, he also agreed to shoulder the responsibility of presiding over the deliberations of the Congress and Khilafat sessions at Ahmedabad.

17. *ibid.*, pp. 253-4.

VII

The Amir-i-Jamia

HAKIM AJMAL KHAN's close association with the Muhammedan Anglo-Oriental College of Aligarh dated back to the last decade of the nineteenth century when he was the personal physician to the Nawab of Rampur. It was, then, that he often lent support to the authorities of the college to get financial assistance from the Nawab. Later, this association became so intimate that Hakim Saheb was made a trustee of the College, a position which he held until the establishment of the Jamia Millia Islamia in 1920. In fact, Hakim Saheb was in the forefront of the movement which was launched in the country for elevating the M.A.O. College to the status of a Muslim University. After the necessary funds had been collected and the foundation committee for the university formed, there arose, over the issue of the framing of the university constitution, a difference of opinion among the pro-British elements among the Muslims and the rest who wished to turn the institution into a true Muslim University. The former was represented by the Muslim leaders like Sahibzada Aftab Ahmed Khan, Nawab Muzzamilullah Khan, Nawab Ishaq and others who were in favour of accepting the university in whatever form the government was prepared to offer it. Hakim Ajmal Khan, Mohammad Ali, Shaukat Ali and Nawab Vaqar-ul-Mulk belonged to the latter group of leaders who yearned to make the university run on the lines of a great centre of learning—as the one established in Cordoba under the Muslim rule in Spain—to which were to be affiliated all the Muslim schools and colleges of the country.

They were opposed to the three recommendations made by the government which stipulated that the university should not be an affiliating body, that the name of the university should be the Aligarh University and not the Muslim University and that the Viceroy and not the Emperor of India should be its Chancellor.

Following the detention of the Ali Brothers, during the World War I, and the resignation of Nawab Vaqarul Mulk from the secretaryship of the college, Hakim Ajmal Khan was the lone figure left in the field. But he did not favour a prolonged conflict and tactfully suggested a way out to resolve the differences among the members of the warring factions. Accordingly a committee was formed with Nawab Hameedullah Khan of Bhopal, Mazharul Haq and Dr. M. A. Ansari to draft the constitution of the proposed University in consultation with the Education Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, Sir Sankaran Nair. Though Hakim Saheb himself did not accept its membership, his advice was always available to the members of the committee. Ultimately their efforts were crowned with success but the proposed University remained fully under the control of the Government and was, therefore, unable to play that significant role which the Muslim leaders expected it to play.

When, therefore, non-cooperation was given a shape in 1920 and the gradual withdrawal of students from the government owned, aided or controlled educational institutions was decided upon, Hakim Ajmal Khan along with others addressed a letter to the M.A.O. College authorities to stop accepting the grant from the Government. They also made it explicit that, in case this request was not acceded to, they would be forced to ask the students to come out of the College. The request was again repeated by Hakim Ajmal Khan, Dr. Ansari, the Ali Brothers, T.A.K. Sherwani and Abdul Majeed Khwaja in a meeting of the university court urging non-coope-

ration with the government with a view to running the institution on the national lines. The authorities replied with a non-confidence motion against them. The non-cooperators including Mahatma Gandhi and Ali Brothers were, therefore, forced to call upon the students of the M.A.O. College to leave their *alma-mater* and join the national movement to make the dream of a free university a reality. Despite threats posed by the authorities and restrictions imposed on students not to leave the college, nearly 300 boys came out of it and announced their decision to join the non-cooperation movement. It was followed by a set of coercive measures. The authorities sought to chill the enthusiasm by stopping the food and water supply, sanitary arrangements and medical aid to the agitating students. When nothing could deter the students the authorities resorted to the use of police force in throwing them out of the college. On eviction from the premises of the college both the staff and students came out in the open and lingered in tents which Hakim Ajmal Khan had arranged to be pitched there. Later a few bungalows were rented to house the institution and shelter the striking students whose number was swelling every day.

It was at this juncture that three divergent views came to be expressed by the leaders of the movement. Maulana Mohammad Ali was not in favour of vacating the premises even in the face of police repression, he wished the students to stay on in order to capture the university and liberate it from official control. The fiery poet Maulana Hasrat Mohani and his supporters desired to use force against the police excesses. But Hakim Ajmal Khan was among those who adopted a pragmatic approach. He advocated the establishment of yet another institution which would be free from government control. Ultimately Hakim Saheb's decision prevailed and the *Jamia Millia Islamia* (National Muslim University) was founded at Aligarh on Friday the 29 October 1920 by *Shaikh-ul-Hind*

Maulana Mahmud Hasan of Deoband who had just returned from the exile in Malta where he had been interned for his alleged involvement in the Silk-letters conspiracy case. He had grown so feeble in health that his presidential address was read out by his disciple, Maulana Shabbir Ahmed Usmani. In his historic address the *Shaikh-ul-Hind* said:

“ . . . Comrades, I, with a few of my friends, took a step forward towards Aligarh when I felt that I shall find sympathisers in my grief (which has been consuming bones), not in *madrasahs* and *khanqahs* (monastries) but in schools and colleges; thus we have been able to establish intimate relations between two historic centres of learning in India, Deoband and Aligarh . . . ”

“The informed ones among you know that my elders never issued a *fatwa* (of *kufr*) prohibiting the learning of any foreign language or the sciences of other peoples. Yes, they did say that the ultimate result of education, as has been generally seen, was that its acquirers were dyed deep in the ways of the Christians, were in the habit of showering blasphemous remarks over their religion and co-religionists or turned out to be the worshippers of the government of the day. Hence, they considered it better to remain ignorant than to acquire knowledge in such fashion . . . ”

“The great leaders of our nation have, as a matter of fact, realised the basic need of the *Ummat-i-Islamiah*. If the students of the Muslim institutions, where modern sciences are taught, are kept ignorant of their religion, thereby forgetting their Islamic and national duties, then such institutions become instrumental in weakening the prestige of the Muslims. Therefore, it has been announced that there will be laid the foundation of an independent university which has nothing to do with government sub-

sidy and interference and whose organisation is based on Islamic principles and national aspirations.”¹

These historic words explain the objectives that led to the birth of the Jamia Millia Islamia which aimed at producing Muslims with nationalist outlook. It was an event of great significance in the history of India that the Muslim students came out of their college and gave a lead to the founding of similar other educational institutions throughout the country.

Hakim Ajmal Khan was appointed the first *Amir-i-Jamia* (Chancellor) of the Jamia Millia Islamia which position he held until his death in 1927. Maulana Mohammad Ali became its first *Shaikh-ul-Jamia* (Vice-Chancellor) but after his internment at a later date, he was succeeded by Abdul Majeed Khwaja. In a meeting held on 22 November, 1920, Hakim Saheb was elected chairman of the Foundation Committee of the Jamia, which was to function until the formation of the Board of Trustees and the finalisation of rules and regulations. On the advice of Maulana Mohammad Ali and Hakim Saheb, Mahatma Gandhi addressed a letter to the poet Muhammed Iqbal to accept the position of the *Shaikh-ul-Jamia*. Mahatma wrote to him that “the Muslim National University calls you. If you could take charge of it, I am sure that it will prosper under your cultured leadership. Hakim Ajmal Khan and Dr. Ansari, and, of course, the Ali Brothers, desire it. I wish you would see your way to respond. Your expenses on a scale suited to the new awakening can be easily guaranteed.”² But Iqbal declined the offer on the ground of ill-health.

However, the responsibility of running the Jamia had to be shouldered by Hakim Ajmal Khan, who, in his capacity as the *Amir-i-Jamia* was required to look after its well-being

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1. Shaikh-ul-Hind, Maulana Mahmud Hasan, *Khutba-i-Sadarat Jalsa-i-Iftitah*, 29 October, 1920, Delhi, 1920, pp. 6-9.
 2. *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. xix, p. 34.

and development. Though the Ali Brothers wanted the Jamia to serve as a training centre for the volunteers and workers of the national movement, Hakim Saheb made it a point to shape it as a permanent institution with the purpose of imparting national education to its students. In fact, he was against wasting money over the fulfilment of political needs which could have their way through other sources as well. Thus, the objects with which the Jamia was brought into existence included not only the programme of imparting education in the ancient and modern learning but also in the religious and secular subjects. It was to be completely free from the control and influence of the government and was supposed to promote the cause of the national struggle for India's independence.

The object with which the Jamia was founded could well be seen in the first convocation address that Hakim Saheb delivered in 1921. He said :

“As a matter of principle, we have put education on the right path. Though we have endeavoured to produce true Muslims we have not ignored the fact as well that environment creates greater impact in matters of education and training. We have in view the ideal of creating the sense of service towards the country together with Islam . . . It has been thought necessary for the Hindu students to receive knowledge of many Islamic things. Similarly, it has been considered essential for the Muslim students not to remain ignorant of the important Hindu rituals, Hindu civilisation and culture, as a united India nationality is based on their mutual understanding only.”³

This clearly manifested the need for an integrated society, well aware of a common nationality and which the Jamia was

3. Hakim Ajmal Khan, *Khutba-i-Sadarat*, 1921, Aligarh, 1921, p. 4.

intended to create. It also urged the Indians to be good Muslims or Hindus.

On mother-tongue which was adopted by the Jamia as medium of instruction and expression, Hakim Saheb said:

“ . . . since the aim of our education is not to produce a band of servants and subordinates but to develop interest in knowledge as such, and also to make an impact upon the actions of the individuals, we have, with one stroke of pen, done away with the unnatural means of imparting instructions through a foreign language.”⁴

Like many other Indian leaders Hakim Saheb was also critical of making education a means to secure government jobs. He wanted the students to lead a respectable life by pursuing a vocation which had been introduced in the Jamia. He said:

“A person can earn his bread by remaining a Muslim and a conscientious member of the Islamic community. It was, in no way, essential for him to sacrifice religion at the altar of livelihood, nor was it necessary to gain personal benefits at the cost of nation . . . I am very happy that craft and vocational training were made compulsory for everybody under the new system of education adopted by the Jamia Millia.”⁵

Addressing the teachers, Hakim Saheb reminded them that their duty was not merely imparting bookish knowledge to the students. They were also to realise the greater responsibility of constructing the future building of the Islamic nation with the effective material provided to them in the shape of students. To accomplish this task, action was more effectively required than mere lessons. He called upon the teachers to set the example of an ideal life before their students since he believed

4. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

that good actions were more effective than mere teaching. The teachers were required to present the precepts of sincerity and sacrifice, truth and piety through their lives which would enlighten the students for the future.

This concept of leadership reminds us of the traditional teachers in ancient India who preached only that which they themselves practised. Such an army of devoted teachers was the need of the country during her struggle for freedom and which it was believed, could be provided by the Jamia alone.

Addressing the students, Hakim Saheb expressed his joy over the tenacity and courage shown by them. In spite of poor financial condition of many students, they did not consider their poverty an obstacle in their way. In fact they stood the test of time and showed remarkable patience and fortitude. He believed that the sufferings of the freedom fighters interned within the four walls of the prison would end soon. He was sure that if they stuck to their lofty ideals and pious objectives they would surmount all difficulties. Only the high-thinking, sacred ideals and broad-mindedness could, in his view, bring true happiness. They should aim at expressing true feelings of love towards mankind and should always keep in mind that their existence was essential to eliminate falsehood and establish truth in the world.

Congratulating the successful candidates, he went on :

“Those of you, whom the degree for the final examination of the Jamia is being awarded should, in no way conclude that the phase of their educational life had come to a close. Instead, they should remember that they were entering the stage of real education when they would learn the ABC of life. They should also bear this fact in mind that they are stepping into the world as servants. They are not meant for serving any particular group or com-

munity but to serve the humanity at large. They are the possessors of that learning which aims at removing the barriers of caste and creed and making the man free . . . By no means should they consider themselves penniless, friendless or helpless since they are the carriers of that message which is the real panacea for all worldly ills.”⁶

This entire address symbolised the high ideals for which the Jamia had been created. Such was the concept of national education which the Jamia had undertaken to impart to students. The government-owned, aided or controlled educational institutions could not have given the type of education which the country expected her students to receive. It is rightly observed that “when the old college and the newly-thought of Jamia were under discussion at Aligarh, Ajmal Khan was determined to present the Jamia before the world with a new programme of national education.” In fact he always emphasised the need of producing “a special type of people who could ensure the continuity of Islamic culture.” In his view the Jamia aimed at producing “such Muslims who were not only acquainted with their religion but practised it rigorously, who were fully familiar with their past and were conscious of their future, who could comprehend the main object of the existence of their nation and their own being in the world and who could join the ranks of Islamic missionaries as useful and effective members. Although they needed to be familiar with modern knowledge but were supposed to present themselves as model of Islamic way of life.”⁷

Keeping the contents of Hakim Saheb’s convocation address in mind, if we examine the syllabus that was adopted by the Jamia for the courses of studies, we would find the national spirit incorporated in it. This syllabus was prepared by a com-

6. *ibid.*

7. *ibid.*, p. 7.

mittee of eminent leaders and educationists who aimed at imparting national education to the students. This Committee included such illustrious names as Dr. Iqbal, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Maulvi Abdul Haq, Maulana Azad Subhani, Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew, Maulvi Sadruddin, Dr. M. A. Ansari, Maulana Mohammad Ali, Maulana Shabbir Ahmed Usmani, Principal S. K. Rudra, Principal Gidwani, Prof. Sehwan, C.F. Andrews, Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Maulana Sulaiman Nadvi and so on. Thus this national syllabus bore the seal of approval from the eminent educationists of the day.

The syllabi made it compulsory for the Muslim students to learn *Islamiyat*, so also it was incumbent upon the Hindu students to study Hindu ethics. Similarly Hindi was made compulsory for those whose mother-tongue was Urdu and vice-versa. The study of Arabic and English was to start at Class IV. Sanskrit was made a compulsory subject for the Hindu students. Similarly craft was made a compulsory subject from class V onwards. Calligraphy was made a part of the syllabi. It was expected of the Jamiites to put on *Khaddar* since it was their own fabric.

In fact, Hakim Saheb always took a keen interest in the education of his co-religionists. He was hurt to see the muslim children using abusive language and living in poor and unhealthy surroundings. Similarly he always felt shocked to find a very low percentage of Muslim students in Delhi.

It had, therefore, become his mission to convince his co-religionists of the urgent need of spreading education among the members of his community. He considered it to be the duty of every Muslim not to allow his children to remain illiterate. Like Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, he viewed education to be a cure for all the ills of the modern society. It was this urge that always compelled Hakim Saheb to take interest in

the affairs of the Muhammedan Anglo-Oriental College of Aligarh.

Hakim Saheb gave so much importance to education that he associated himself with all those organisations and institutions that were in one way or the other concerned with the educational upliftment of the community. As early as 1910 he presided over the conference of the *Nadwat-ul-Ulama*⁸ in Delhi where he insisted the *Ulama* to act in accordance with the requirements of modern times. He condemned the division of Muslims in different groups and the discussions that prevailed among them. He asked them to reform their syllabus and impart such education to the community as suited them in the changing times. Again he presided over the deliberations of the *Nadwat-ul-Ulama* in 1925 at Kanpur and declared that the *Nadwa* should aim only at creating such *Ulama* who could comprehend the demands of their age. He exhorted them to impart education on modern lines, discuss and solve the economic and social issues such as bank interest, *purdah* system, women education and to reform their syllabus.

Similarly in 1917, Hakim Saheb conceived the idea of embodying his ideal in the form of an institution. He consulted eminent men who promised him all possible help. This encouraged Hakim Saheb to spread his message to a large section of his community. It was, therefore, decided by the local leaders to establish a Muslim College in Delhi as envi-

8. The Muslim community faced a rift in the last decade of the 19th century on the issue of religious and secular education. Some of the *Ulama* wanted both types of instructions to be imparted simultaneously and therefore, the *Nadwat-ul-Ulama* was established in 1894. In 1905, when Maulana Shibli Nomani took over the *Nadwa* as its Secretary he made the teaching of English language compulsory in it. It was this modernity of the *Nadwa* that attracted Hakim Ajmal Khan towards it.

saged by Hakim Saheb. An appeal for funds was issued and Hakim Saheb was able to collect an amount of one and a half lakh rupees which fell much short of the stipulated expenditure of six and a half lakh rupees. Hakim Saheb addressed meetings, lamented the sad state of affairs and convinced the people of the need for a Muslim College in Delhi. He made the people aware of their responsibility towards educating their children. He believed that neglect of education was a stigma on the fair name of Islam as well as humanity. Addressing a meeting he said :⁹

“ . . . instead of going into the details of the past history if we only just glance through the recent times it would be found that there was a great genius like Shah Waliullah whose writings earned recognition in far off countries like Egypt. Similarly, there was Shah Abdul Aziz whose scholarship remains an acknowledged fact and who would inspire the people for many centuries to come. There were also such great mystics as Mirza Mazhar Jan-e-Janan and Shah Kalimullah Jahanabadi whose lives might resurrect the dead nations. There lived such great physicians as Hakim Shareef Khan and Hakim Arzani whose fame reached every nook and corner of the country. It was in this very city of Delhi alone that there existed great poets and perfect artists who had no parallel in the history.”

Lamenting upon the sorry state of affairs he added:

“ . . . The city that witnessed such distinguished personalities possesses now, neither a saint nor a *Muhaddis* (scholar of *Hadith*), neither a mystic nor an orator. The spring had been replaced by autumn. It was for this

9. Hakim Jameel Khan, *Seerat-i-Ajmal*, Delhi, nd., pp. 109-110.

reason that there was a dire need for the establishment of an Islamic college in Delhi.”¹⁰

“If we had committed a sin” Hakim Saheb further added, “by not starting the college five years earlier we would be branded doubly guilty for not starting it for the next five years.”¹¹ However, the scheme could not materialise owing to the heavy involvement of Hakim Saheb in the national politics. He, therefore, returned to the donors whatever money was collected for this purpose. But soon his dream crystallised in the shape of Jamia Millia Islamia of which he was one of the founding fathers.

Hakim Saheb had to encounter various difficulties to keep the Jamia intact. On the one hand, he was to find out resources for the Jamia to meet its day-to-day expenditure, on the other hand, he was to counter the anti-Jamia propaganda obnoxiously made by the pro-British elements. It was really an irony of circumstances that the Aligarh College authorities stooped to the lowest depth and threw away all decency and decorum to the winds. The columns of the *Aligarh Institute Gazette* were full of the vilest abuse and all the available English and vernacular dailies were requisitioned for the ‘propaganda of invective, calumny and scandal.’ But Hakim Saheb stood firm and behaved with unrivalled dignity and fortitude, keeping himself engaged in the building up of the infant institution.

The Khilafat Committee was supposed to be responsible for financing the Jamia in the beginning. It had sanctioned an amount of ten thousand rupees as per requirements of its budget. But these sums proved to be insufficient. Hakim Saheb was not in favour of getting funds from the parties. He, there-

10. *ibid.*

11. Qazi Mohd. Abdul Ghaffar, *Hayat-i-Ajmal*, Aligarh, 1950, pp. 166-7.

fore, decided to make Jamia, a self-sufficient and self-reliant institution and create a permanent fund for it. He moved from place to place to convince the people of the progress made by the Jamia. He further introduced it to the ruling classes and upper strata of society, invited the national leaders to inspect the Jamia and raised funds for it. He made the Khilafat Committee pass a resolution as early as November 1920 that Jamia was a free institution and not answerable to any party. However, the Khilafat Committee also passed resolutions "to establish an educational fund for financing the Jamia with a view to help the spread of national education and also to strengthen the position of an institution which was the first to be brought into existence by the non-cooperation movement." It was acknowledged as a seat of future Muslim culture in free and united India. It was rightly observed that "though neglected to a large extent and working against tremendous odds" the Jamia had shown within a short span of two years "a record of work which any institution might justly be proud of." An appeal was made to collect ten lakh rupees for this national institution in 1922 and it was also suggested that at least Rs. 20/- per month were to be given to this university by every District Khilafat Committee or a suitable sum by the Provincial Khilafat Committees corresponding to the number of districts in each province. Thus it was mainly due to Hakim Saheb's efforts that the Jamia was made to stand on its own in respect of funds and the Khilafat Committee ceased to pass the budget for it.

Crisis overtook Jamia in 1924 and almost jeopardised its very existence. The non-cooperation had already been suspended in 1922. Many teachers and students were in the prison. The Khilafat was abolished by Mustafa Kamal in 1924. The enthusiasm of the national leaders towards the movement also abated. The political parties lost interest in the affairs of the country. The Jamia had no funds. The crisis, wor-

sened to an extent that there was even a move to close it down. But Hakim Saheb and his friends like Dr. Ansari, Abdul Majeed Khwaja rose to the occasion and did not allow its closure. Mahatma Gandhi also supported the Hakim Saheb's group and offered himself to beg money for it if that was the only problem.

Zakir Husain was then in Germany, who had earlier left Jamia temporarily to complete his research. When he was informed of the likely closure of the Jamia, he telegraphically sent a message to Hakim Saheb to the effect:

"I and some of my friends are prepared to dedicate our lives to the service of Jamia. Jamia should not be allowed to be closed till our return."¹²

Following this message a deputation of the Jamia alumni met Hakim Saheb and requested him not to let Jamia be closed before the arrival of Zakir Saheb. They also assured him of their whole-hearted co-operation and preparedness to work without remuneration in case it was needed. Hakim Saheb, therefore, decided to shift the Jamia to Delhi from where he could look after it well. The issue was discussed at length in a meeting of the Board of Trustees where Hakim Saheb offered to shoulder the responsibility of running the Jamia by shifting it to Delhi. The members doubted the rationale behind the proposal of shifting the Jamia from Aligarh which could in a way end the institution itself. However, the question of the continuance of the Jamia was discussed at length by a sub-committee specially constituted for the purpose. It consisted of Hakim Ajmal Khan, the Ali Brothers, Maulana Azad, Dr. Ansari and Abdul Majeed Khwaja. At long last it was decided that the Jamia should continue to exist. Further the foundation committee, which

12. Abdul Ghaffar Mudholi, *Jamia ki Kahani*, Delhi, 1965, p. 69.

met under the chairmanship of Hakim Saheb on 17 March, 1925, gave its verdict in favour of the shifting of the Jamia to Delhi to which Mahatma Gandhi also gave his consent.

Thus, the entire responsibility of maintaining Jamia rested now, on the shoulders of Hakim Ajmal Khan since it was at his initiative that the institution was brought to Delhi. It is rightly said that the Jamia was a dying patient in Aligarh whom this *messiah* carried to his own house in a very hopeless condition. The Jamia was thus shifted to Delhi and was housed in Karol Bagh in rented building close to the Tibbia College. Hakim Saheb was to see now that the twin institutions prospered under his care. It was rightly remarked by Maulana Mohammad Ali that 'the Tibbia College was the child of Hakim Saheb's youth and the Jamia Millia, the child of his old age.'¹³ It is said that a father's love for his child, born in old age, increases with the passage of time.

Same was true in case of Hakim Saheb whose love for Jamia increased to the extent that he even sold out some portion of his property in order to keep the Jamia alive. "Hakim Saheb had such extensive personal relations", observes Dr. Yusuf Husain Khan, who himself had been a student of the Jamia, "that he succeeded in bringing money from some source or the other for meeting the requirements of the Jamia. The Jamia people themselves remained unaware of the fact as to wherefrom he brought money . . . it was the invisible hand of Hakim Saheb that always guided the destiny of the Jamia people."¹⁴ Similarly, he called upon the rulers of the princely states also to donate liberally towards the funds of the Jamia and in response got handsome amount of money. His personal influence helped in getting more donations for the institution. Similarly, Hakim Saheb personally visited various

13. *The Hamdard*, Delhi, 6 January, 1928.

14. Yusuf Husain Khan, *Yadon Ki Duniya*, Azamgarh, 1967, p. 91.

places and collected funds for the Jamia. His personal visits made the people donate more. During such tours he not only received financial assistance for the Jamia but also promoted the cause of national education by enlightening the people about the real object of education and the need for it. He also made efforts to integrate and organise the national institutions making them closely related with one another so that the aim of higher education could be successfully achieved. He gave education top priority and was averse to wasting money over social customs and rituals such as marriages in his own community. He himself set an example by donating a part of the marital budget of his daughter to the Jamia. He asked the other party also to follow suit. He also sought help from Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Ansari and Abdul Majeed Khwaja in overcoming the monetary difficulties. Mahatmaji called upon the Hindus to donate towards the Jamia funds and help the institution with larger sums of money.

These facts are a clear proof of Hakim Saheb's sincere efforts to put the Jamia on a sound footing. In fact, he was of the view that since Jamia had a very meagre budget in comparison to budget of other similar national institutions one single group of Delhi could conveniently shoulder its financial responsibilities. It would make the Jamia self-sufficient and self-reliant within a year or two. It was for this reason that he concentrated his energies on providing financial stability to the Jamia. In the field of administration, academic pursuits and publications, he sought the assistance of several persons, who whole-heartedly co-operated with him in order to make the Jamia an ideal institution.

When in 1925, Hakim Saheb visited the European countries alongwith Dr. M. A. Ansari, he was contacted in Paris by Zakir Husain, who had already pledged to work at the Jamia after the completion of his studies in Berlin and had earlier informed him of his decision telegraphically. Zakir

Saheb repeated his pledge and assured Hakim Saheb and Dr. Ansari of placing his services at the disposal of the Jamia, on his return. Zakir Saheb later deputed Abid Husain, Mohammed Mujeeb, Barkat Ali Qureshi and K.A. Hamied to wait upon Hakim Saheb and assure him of their decision to serve the Jamia. Accordingly all the four young Indians went to Vienna where Hakim Ajmal Khan and Dr. Ansari were staying. Hakim Saheb was most pleased to find in far-off lands such enthusiastic youngmen who were prepared to serve an almost collapsing institution. K.A. Hamied later gave the following account of this meeting with Hakim Saheb in Vienna:

“Sometime during 1925, Hakim Ajmal Khan and Dr. Ansari came to Europe. Zakir Husain met him in Paris and assured them of devoting his life to Jamia. Zakir Husain asked Abid Husain, Mujeeb, Barkat Ali Qureshi and myself to go to Vienna and meet the two great leaders. Zakir Husain could not come with us as he was busy preparing for his examination.

“All the four of us went to Vienna . . . we went to Hotel Astoria where Hakim Ajmal Khan and Dr. Ansari were staying. They were very pleased to meet us. It was for the first time I saw Hakim Saheb dressed in European style. We asked several questions about the Jamia and we pledged our loyalty to these great leaders and thanked them to have kept the Jamia alive. We assured Hakim Saheb and Dr. Ansari that we shall work for the Jamia on our return to India . . . ”¹⁵

True to his words, Dr. Zakir Husain returned home the very next year alongwith M. Mujeeb and Dr. Abid Husain and all the three devoted themselves to the cause of the

15. K. A. Hamied, *An Autobiography : A Life to Remember*, Bombay, 1972, p. 46.

Jamia and continued to do so until the attainment of independence by India in 1947. With the coming of this splendid trio Jamia Millia got a new lease of life in its sixth year of existence. Its shifting from Aligarh to Delhi, its separation from politics and the pledge for its service by the western educated people heralded a new era of changes. Zakir Saheb served the institution as *Shaikh-ul-Jamia* (Vice-Chancellor), Dr. Abid Husain as its Registrar and M. Mujeeb as Professor of History. Dr. Abid Husain was incharge of the publications and also the Editor of *Jamia* and *Payam-i-Taleem*. Later in free India, Dr. Zakir Husain was called upon to serve the country and the nation in various capacities assuming ultimately the highest office as President of the Indian Republic in May 1967 and held it until his death in May 1969. Dr. Abid Husain also got involved in other national activities but Prof. M. Mujeeb remained engaged in the accomplishment of the task of consolidating the Jamia as its Vice-Chancellor, and remained in office until his retirement in 1972 on the ground of ill-health.

During the chancellorship of Hakim Ajmal Khan the Jamia made tremendous progress. In fact it got a fresh impetus in Delhi and entered into its second but crucial phase. Although the shift from Aligarh had affected it so badly that there were in all about eighty teachers and students in it but it was due to Hakim Saheb's untiring efforts that the Jamia was revitalised. It started a night school for the adults on its premises which soon had a large enrolment. A branch school also saw the light of the day in the Bara Hindu Rao locality of Delhi. *Jamia*, the literary magazine was already being published since 1923 and now the *Payam-i-Taleem* began to be published as a fortnightly newsletter for the school-going children. An Urdu Academy was established with Dr. Abid Husain as Secretary for the organisation of extension lectures and the publication of books in Urdu on various subjects of

academic interest. The project method was introduced in the Jamia School which attracted the attention of the educationists abroad. It started new courses in Journalism and Commerce and gave practical training in trade by establishing children's shops which were managed purely by the children themselves. The Jamia had its own kitchen and a hostel where the house system was introduced. Scouting and various games were also introduced. It had a health centre also which had a full-time medical officer.

Besides Maulana Mohammad Ali, Maulana Shaukat Ali and others, the Jamia had the privilege of enjoying the services of such well-known and dedicated teachers as Maulana Abdul Haie (*Tafseer*), Maulana Mohammed Ali Shah (Hadith and Islamic Jurisprudence), Maulana Mohd. Aslam Jairajpuri (Islamic History), Pandit Jwala Prasad, M.A., L.L.B. (Hindu Ethics), Maulana Mohammad Ali Swati (Arabic), Maulana Sharfuddin Tonki (Urdu), Mohd. Abdul Aziz Ansari, M.A., LL.B., and Syed Rauf Pasha, B.A. (English), Moazzam Ali Khan, B.A. (Oxon) and E.G. Kellot, M.A. (Cantab) (History and Politics), Wahidullah, B.A. Hons (Sociology), Abdul Majeed Khwaja, B.A. (Cantab) Bar-at-Law, (Law) A.A. Qureshi, B.A. (Geography), K.A. Hamied and L.N. Gupta, M.Sc. (Chemistry), D.N. Mukerji, M.A. (Maths), R. N. Saloom, B.A. (Cantab) (Physics), Dr. Mohd. Azim Khan, M.B. (Botany), D.G. Ibsen, F.S. Master, B.A. (Journalism) and Agarwal, B.A. (Commerce). All of them were well-versed in their subjects and made contributions in their respective fields.

The Jamia, being a national institution encouraged the constructive programme of Mahatma Gandhi. The use of *Charkha* and *Takli* became a routine with the Jamiaites as it promoted self-help, self-reliance and self-sufficiency.

Jamia was the child of non-cooperation which, in turn, was the outcome of the Jallianwala Bagh and the Khilafat move-

ments. Thus the Jamiites celebrated the National Week regularly between 6th and 13th April every year to mark the period when the *Satyagraha* was launched against the Rowlatt Act in 1919 and the day when General Dyer massacred hundreds of innocent Indians in the Jallianwala Bagh at Amritsar. It was to the credit of the Jamia that the first contribution to Mahatma Gandhi's Swaraj fund was made by the teachers and students of the Jamia. The Jamiites participated in the struggle for freedom and courted arrests.

The national leaders were always impressed by the progress and achievements of the Jamia. It attracted their attention so much that they looked forward to the opportunity of visiting the institution. Mahatma Gandhi's son, Dev Das joined the Jamia as a teacher. Similarly Mahatmaji's grandson Rasiklal was admitted here as a student. It is reported that Subhas Chandra Bose also had a desire to come down to Jamia but, then, his presence was more urgently required in Bengal. Similarly, Mahatma Gandhi offered the services of C. F. Andrews, J. B. Kripalani and some other luminaries of the educational world.

It was mainly due to the influence and efforts of Hakim Saheb that the national leaders got opportunity to visit the Jamia and see its functioning personally. Thus we find a long list of distinguished visitors which included P. C. Ray, M. Marmaduke Pickthall, Vithalbhai Patel, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Begum Sultan Jahan of Bhopal, Seth Jamnalal Bajaj, Mahadev Desai etc. who recognised the merit of the institution and expressed their joy and satisfaction over the way in which the Jamia was flourishing. The Congress President, Srinivas Iyyengar, on his visit to the institution in January 1927, remarked: 'other national educational institutions have become lifeless but I find the Jamia pulsating with life and I wish to God that its foundations become more

secure.”¹⁶ Similarly, the day when Mahatma Gandhi met the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, i.e. 2 November, 1927, he visited the Jamia also. Hakim Saheb had been instrumental in materialising Mahatmaji’s visit to the institution. In fact Mahatma’s presence remained etched in the memory of the people in the sense that it was the last of his visits to the Jamia during the life-time of the *Masih-ul-Mulk* Hakim Ajmal Khan. Since Mahatma had visited the Jamia after a long time Hakim Saheb introduced to him the institution in the following words :¹⁷

“Although Jamia Millia is the child of non-cooperation and was founded at Aligarh in 1920 with the object of providing educational facilities to such students as had left the Government institutions at the call of Mahatma Gandhi, it did not take part in politics. To the children of our nation it simply gave national education. The type of education that is usually imparted in government institutions has nothing to do with this institution. That type of institution may be useful for those who wish to enter the government courts but it is meaningless for millions of Indians. Jamia was established only with this view.”

Addressing the gathering, Mahatmaji said:¹⁸

“Hakimji has reminded you of that memorable day (11th October, 1920), when Hindus and Muslims had sunk their differences and they had united for ever, when students all over India were invited to come out of all government-owned or aided institutions, I know that I had a great hand in this invitation, but I make bold to say that even after seven years, I don’t feel the least

16. Abdul Ghaffar Mudholi, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

17. Qazi Mohd. Abdul Ghaffar, *op. cit.*, p. 448.

18. *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XXXV, pp. 210.11.

sorry for that nor do I think that I committed a blunder in that.

"I believe that those who gave up their studies at the Government institutions did a great service to the country. I am sure that when the history of that period in India will be written the historian will no doubt have to write that those who boycotted Government institutions did great good to themselves and to their country.

"I am glad to find here some of the traces of those proud days, and I am very happy that you are trying your utmost to keep the flag flying. Your number is small but the world is never overflowed with good and true men. I ask you not to worry yourselves about the smallness of the number, but to remember that however few you may be the freedom of the country depends on you. Freedom has very little to do with your learning the letters or even with mere mechanical plying of the *takli*. If you have not the things essential for the freedom of India, I do not know who else has them. Those things are fear of God and freedom from fear of any man or a combination of men called an empire. If training in these two essentials cannot be had in your institution, I do not know where else it can be had. But I know your professors, I know Hakim Saheb, and I am sure that these two essentials are being very carefully taught.

"I do not mind the unsatisfactory state of your finances. In fact, I am glad that we should be living from hand to mouth, so that we may all the better cherish our Maker and fear Him.

"Hakimji was quite right when he said that it was difficult for me to come to Delhi. But to come to you was a solace and a comfort. It is not to please you that I came here, but to please myself. I came with a selfish end in

view, and that is to tell you that inspite of the storm of hatred and poison raging outside your Millia, inspite of the Muslim running at the Hindu's throat and vice versa, you boys here will keep your heads cool, will not deny your Maker, will give no room in your hearts to hatred, nor even in your mind gloat over the country and its religions going to wreck and ruin. That's the only hope that has drawn me to you.

"You will have noticed that I have said nothing about *khadi* and *takli*. This is because even *khadi* and *takli* are nothing before the essentials I have talked to you about. You may ply your *takli* and wear *khadi*, but if you do not do the things I have told you, your *khadi* and *takli* will be of no account. But you will, I am sure, not forget what Hakim Saheb has told you about the necessity of wearing *khaddar*. You will bear in mind that it is by means of *khadi* that we are supporting 50,000 spinners today besides hundreds of weavers, washermen, carpenters, etc. Do not forget that many of these are Mussalmans. Without the *Charkha* the Mussalman women in many places would have been starving. There is no other way of identifying with yourselves the Hindu and Muslim poor than that of wearing *khadi*.

"I meet thousands of students in my tour in the country. I find them entangled in ugly and dirty habits, which need no mention, because you all know it. I pray to God that He may save you from those dirty doings. When a man makes his hands, eyes and mind dirty, he is no more a man but he becomes an animal.

"You should always abstain from doing any evil with hands, minds or eyes. If we want to be truly brave men then we must regard all women as our mothers, sisters, or daughters according to their age. Never cast a bad

eye on any lady. We must be prepared to die for the honour of women. I know people forget this duty now-a-days. I once again pray to God to save you from this evil. Above all keep yourselves pure and clean, and learn to keep your promises even at the cost of life, and have the memory of the examples I have cited to you ever green in your hearts."

Though the Indian Muslims faced many political and religious problems Hakim Saheb gave the problem of national education, top-most priority among them all. He aimed at producing national workers for accomplishing the national tasks through such independent national institutions as the Jamia which were less in number.

In a way Jamia owes its existence to Hakim Ajmal Khan alone.

VIII

The Congress and Khilafat Chief

IN THE wake of non-violent, non-cooperation movement the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress selected Hakim Ajmal Khan as the Congress President. He was chosen to the high office in the absence of C. R. Das, who was to preside over the Congress session at Ahmedabad but was arrested at Calcutta in December 1921. In the words of C.F. Andrews, Hakim Saheb "accepted the post of the President, which was unanimously offered to him and thus crowned the whole work of his own life in the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity."¹ Mahatma Gandhi felt most happy at the selection of Hakim Saheb and saw God's hand "behind the fact that the President of the Khilafat Conference also happened to be the President of the Congress." In his view Deshbandhu's arrest did "greater service than his attending the Congress would have done and Hakimji...accepted the burden of Congress Presidentship in addition to that of the Presidentship of the Khilafat Conference and thereby strengthened the Hindu-Muslim unity."²

In the words of Pattabhi Sitaramaiyya Hakim Saheb was selected for this high office "for he was the embodiment of Hindu-Muslim unity."³ This lends credence to the fact that

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1. C.F. Andrews, Hakim Ajmal Khan in *Eminent Mussalmans*, Madras, 1926, p. 298.
 2. *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XXII, p. 47.
 3. B. Pattabhi Sitaramaiyya, *The History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. I, Bombay, 1967, p. 224.

Hakim Saheb was an acknowledged leader of the Hindus as well as Muslims. It was for this reason that his selection was hailed by all sections of society, high or low, big or small, the rich or the poor. But the Government had unleashed a reign of terror which resulted in the imprisonment of most of the important leaders of the country. Hakim Saheb himself was not certain that he would safely reach Ahmedabad to preside over the deliberations at the Congress Session and the Khilafat Conference. He was, however, prepared to court arrest any moment. He started sleeping on the floor and subjected himself to all hardships and rigours of life in order to adjust himself to jail whenever it came.

The Ahmedabad session of the Congress proved to be a memorable one. The Reception Committee held a *Swadeshi* exhibition on this occasion. It was a coincidence that a similar exhibition was also organised when the 18th session of the Congress was held at Ahmedabad for the first time in 1902 under the presidentship of Surendranath Banerjea. The delegates and the visitors were accommodated in a special camp called the Khadinagar. The delegates' camp, the Congress pandal and other structures were all covered with pure hand-spun *khaddar*. It was for the first time that the chairs and benches for the delegates were replaced by the seating arrangement on the floor which was covered with *Khadi*. Hindustani was used for the business of the session and *khaddar* worth over two lakh of rupees was used for the tents pitched for the Congress delegates. The Reception Committee had arranged to admit about one lakh visitors to the Congress pandal but the actual attendance by far surpassed the expectations when some two lakh people came to attend it. Owing to the overwhelming rush the Reception Committee could issue neither season tickets nor entrance tickets. The imprisonment of the national leaders and workers filled the people with new hopes and joy for they entertained the belief that the suffering was the surest remedy

for the attainment of freedom and breaking down the mightiest force that might be pitted against it.”

Out of a total number of entitled members of the Subjects Committee only 283 attended the Ahmedabad session. It consisted of 14 ladies, 65 Muslims, 197 Hindus, 6 Sikhs and 1 Parsi. Similarly 4,728 delegates out of a total number of 6,234 attended it. Of them 144 were ladies, 521 Muslims, 65 Sikhs, 7 Parsis and 3,991 others.

A large number of women also attended the session. This increase in the number of women delegates could be attributed to the women's conference that was being held at Ahmedabad simultaneously with the Congress under the presidency of Bi Amman, the brave mother of the Ali Brothers.

The Reception Committee's Chairman, Vallabhabhai Patel delivered his address in Hindi. Referring to the president he said that “. . . in Hakim Ajmal Khan Saheb whom the AICC has elected to act in Deshbandhu, C. R. Das's place, we have one of the greatest and noblest of our countrymen. For Hakimji is an embodiment of Hindu-Muslim unity. He commands the confidence and the affection of Hindus and others equally with our Mussalman brothers.”⁴

Hakim Ajmal Khan, in his presidential address, paid rich tributes to the President-elect of the Ahmedabad session, C. R. Das whose arrest had “infused greater spirit and determination into the hearts of national workers and galvanised the entire country to greater activities and sacrifices.”⁵ Making a survey of the progress of non-violent non-cooperation movement, Hakim Saheb felt satisfied that its spirit pervaded throughout the country and there was no true Indian heart even in its

4. *Report of the Indian National Congress*, 1921, p. 112.

5. For quoted extracts from the Presidential Address see *The Report of the Indian National Congress*, 1921, pp. 15-19.

remotest corner which was not filled with suffering and spirit of sacrifice to attain *Swaraj* and get the Khilafat and the Punjab wrongs redressed. "Who can deny the success of the spirit of the non-cooperation movement in India", he said further, "after witnessing the cheerful spirit with which our workers have made and are making willing sacrifices for the cause of their country and are going to jail in ever increasing numbers with a smile on their lips? What is still more is that not even this intense repression has provoked violence. It has only redoubled the national determination. Every successive fit of repression on the part of the Government whether it was in connection with the confiscation of the *Fatwa* of Jamiat-ul-Ulama, the famous Karachi trial or the wholesale application of the Seditious Meetings Act, the Criminal Law Amendment Act or Section 144 of the criminal code by means of which the right of association and peaceful activities of the volunteer organisations, together with other elementary rights of citizenship, were suppressed had had but one effect, viz., the determination on the part of the people to continue the national activities and persist in their demand. A ceaseless pilgrimage to the jail is kept up in vindication of the primary rights of citizenship in all the northern parts of India as also in Maharashtra and Andhra. The nation today realises the grimness and gravity of the great struggle it is engaged in and behaving with the cool determination worthy of heroes fighting for a noble cause." Giving an illustration of the Egyptian people who had launched a similar movement on the lines of Indian people Hakim Saheb said:

"It should be a matter of pride to all of us that India is showing the way to other sister countries. Non-violent non-cooperation has ceased to be merely Indian movement. It is fast becoming an Asiatic movement and the day is not distant when the conscience of the world will adopt non-violent non-cooperation as a world weapon against uni-

versal injustice and untruth.”

Referring to the Prince of Wales who was on a visit to India to inaugurate the legislatures under the Act of 1919 and whose visit was boycotted by the non-cooperators, Hakim Saheb made it clear that the people of India had no quarrel with him. “But we do not want a bankrupt Government to re-establish its fallen political credit by making a capital out of His Royal Highness’ visit.” He made the Congress stand clear by saying that unless the Punjab and Khilafat wrongs were redressed and Swaraj attained, the country was in no mood to accord any welcome to the Prince. The regrettable incidents that took place in Bombay on the arrival of the Prince were due to the unjustifiable steps taken by the Government.

Refuting the charge levelled by the critics of the Congress that the non-cooperation movement had failed, Hakim Saheb said that in all spheres it had achieved considerable success in such a short time. Referring to the boycott of the government educational institutions he said that in spite of the fact that the leaders had made no provision for a sufficient number of institutions the desired result was achieved. So far as the surrender of the titles and membership of the legislatures was concerned those who did not do so had lost their position and prestige in the country. It did not have even the value of the Czarist rouble. “The Government may still manufacture and place them in the market” said Hakim Saheb “but the public simply does not care for them and after all it is the public alone that can give them the position of trust and honour that is claimed for them.” He said that it was true that, with some noble exceptions, the lawyers had not as a class responded to the appeal as they ought to have done but he was hopeful that with the development of Panchayat System the legal practitioners were sure to fall in with public opinion. Similarly the Government servants were also joining the movement by tendering their resignations but the policy of intensive

repression adopted by the Government was responsible for their discouragement. He hoped that the Moderates who had separated themselves from the movement would realise their mistake and take their place with those whose names figured on the national roll of honour.

Touching the tragic events in Malabar, Hakim Ajmal Khan laid the responsibility of provoking Moplah disturbances on the shoulders of the Government. In his view the question had two aspects. The first one was concerned with the Government whereas the other was related to the treatment by Moplahs of their Hindu brethren. As to the first, judging from the evidence before the public one could not help coming to the conclusion that the responsibility of provoking disturbances rested entirely on the shoulders of the Government. "All of us" he said further, "who have had the experience of Amritsar know the horrible nature of the 'pacification'. It was only accidentally that the terrible train-tragedy was revealed to the public the other day. But how many other tragedies there are that have not come to light?" This had a reference to the train tragedy.* Referring to the second aspect of the question concerning the forcible conversions, Hakim Saheb said:

"As to our Hindu brethren who have been forcibly converted or have otherwise suffered at the hands of some of the Moplahs, I fully sympathise with them and there will be no Muslim worthy of the name who will not condemn this entirely un-Islamic act in the strongest possible terms. I feel sure that these stray incidents are the acts of a few misguided individuals and that the rest of the Moplahs are as ready and strong in condemning them as any of us here. Still I should not like the fair name of Islam to be tarnished in the slightest degree and I sincerely regret these deplorable incidents."

* See Footnote No. 18 of this chapter.

Concluding his presidential address Hakim Saheb declared:

“...our country is experiencing terrible convulsions, but it requires no prophet to foretell that these are the birth-pangs of young India that will revive the glorious traditions of our ancient country to take its proud place among the nations of the world.”

A careful reading of the Presidential Address makes it evident that Hakim Ajmal Khan confined it only to the events at home. He touched upon the national affairs and the then existing situation in the country. His main concentration was on the progress and success of non-violent non-cooperation which even the other countries followed to achieve the goal of independence. He also referred to the visit of the Prince who had arrived in India to inaugurate the newly elected legislatures and whose visit was being boycotted by the non-cooperators. In this connection the bureaucracy had determined to suppress the movement which took a violent turn at some places. Hakim Saheb was not far from truth in laying the responsibility of such happenings on the Government since non-violence was a creed with the non-cooperators. Such acts of repression were a proof of the Government's failure to maintain peace, even when the Prince was visiting India. Hakim Saheb was again correct in assessing the effect of all the activities of repression and suppression by the Government which resulted in “the determination on the part of the people to continue their national activities and to persist in their demand.” He was happy and satisfied with the people's “ceaseless pilgrimage to the jail.”

Hakim Saheb's second concern was the Moplah rebellion which originally took place in South India, now Kerala, against the British Government. In fact some of the individuals diverted it against the Hindus who were forcibly converted to the fold of Islam. Such cases were deplored by the Congress Pre-

sident who could never think of such happenings and always preached the gospel of love, peace and truth. He viewed such forcible conversions as disservice to Islam.

Apart from these two points Hakim Saheb did not discuss any other issue such as the Khilafat. He did not do so, perhaps, because he had dealt with it in his presidential address, delivered at the Khilafat Conference. The remaining issues were also not taken up by him in his Congress address owing to the fact that those were discussed at length in the undelivered address of C. R. Das, the President-elect of the Ahmedabad Congress, written just on the eve of his arrest by the Bengal Government and sent in fragments to Mahatma Gandhi with instructions to revise it and put it in order.

This undelivered address of the Deshbandhu was read out by Sarojini Naidu. C. R. Das had given a correct and comprehensive review of Indian nationalism that was primarily rooted in culture and for the recovery of which he had said, "first we must have a house of our own before we can receive a guest, and secondly Indian culture must discover itself before it can be ready to assimilate the western culture." Examining the Government of India Act of 1919 in his undelivered address, Deshbandhu asked in despair, "Now, is there any thing in the Preamble to compel the British Parliament to recognise India, at any time, as a free and equal partner of the British Empire?" "I think not", was his reply. He was "quite willing to co-operate with England but on one condition only, that she recognised this inherent right of India—freedom." "I cannot recommend to you," he said further, "the acceptance of the Act as a basis for co-operation with the Government. I will not purchase peace with dishonour, and so long as the Preamble to the Act stands, and our rights, our inherent right to regulate our own affairs, develop our own individuality, and evolve our own destiny is not recognised I must decline

to consider any terms of peace.”⁶

In the light of these observations it was but obvious for Hakim Ajmal Khan to deliver a short address.

Mahatma Gandhi, then, moved the main and central resolution which took him 35 minutes to read it in English and Hindustani. The resolution incorporated in itself the content of Hakim Ajmal Khan's address where Mahatma Gandhi placed on record “the fixed determination of the Congress to continue the programme of non-violent non-cooperation with greater vigour than hitherto in such manner as each province may determine, till the Punjab and Khilafat wrongs are redressed and Swaraj is established . . .” The resolution called upon the Congressmen to suspend their activities in the wake of repression let loose by the Government and “to offer themselves for arrest by belonging to volunteer organisations to be formed throughout the country.” Every person of the age of 18 was called upon to join the National Volunteer Corps by taking a pledge that he would remain non-violent in word and deed, promote unity, believe in and use *swadeshi*, remove the evil of untouchability and suffer imprisonment, assault or even death. The resolution further advised the holding of meetings with the avoidance of the risk of provocation and violence. Taking for granted that “civil disobedience is the only civilised and effective substitute for an armed rebellion”, the resolution advised the Congress workers “to organise individual civil disobedience and mass civil disobedience when the mass and people have been sufficiently trained in the methods of non-violence”. The resolution appointed Mahatma Gandhi “as the sole executive authority of the Congress” and invested him with “full powers of the All-India Congress Committee . . . and also with the power to appoint a successor in emergency.” It also conferred upon “the said successor, and all subsequent

6. *Report of the Indian National Congress*, 1921, pp. 19-28.

successors, appointed in turn by their predecessors all his aforesaid powers.”⁷

Commenting upon the resolution, B. Pattabhi Sitaramaiyya rightly called it “a thesis on non-cooperation, its philosophy and programme alike”⁸ which in the words of Mahatma Gandhi himself “was absolutely the natural result of the national activities during the past fifteen months.” This resolution”, added Mahatma Gandhi, “is not an arrogant challenge to any body but it is a challenge to authority that is enthroned in arrogance. It is a challenge to the authority which disregards the considered opinion of millions of thinking human beings. It is an humble and an irrevocable challenge to authority, which in order to save itself, wants to crush freedom of opinion and freedom of association,—the two lungs that are absolutely necessary for a man to breathe the oxygen of liberty.”⁹

The delegates to the Congress session discussed the resolution at length and supported it. When the President put the resolution to vote, it was carried by an overwhelming majority, only 10 persons voting against it.

The Congress passed eight more resolutions which were moved from the chair. Of them one related to the Moplah disturbances and declared that the non-cooperation or the Khilafat movement had nothing to do with it as the Khilafat preachers were denied entry into the affected parts by the district authorities for six months before the disturbance. Infact it was due to causes wholly unrelated with the two movements and the outbreak would not have occurred had the message of non-violence been allowed to reach them. Nevertheless the Congress, through its resolution, deplored the act done by way of forcible conversions and destruction of life and property. It

7. *Ibid.*, pp. 30-6.

8. B. Pattabhi Sitaramaiyya, *op. cit.*, p. 224.

9. *Report of the Indian National Congress*, 1921, p. 36.

said that the spread of the disturbances in Malabar could have been prevented if the Government of Madras had accepted the assistance of Maulana Yaqub Hasan and other non-cooperators and allowed Mahatma Gandhi to proceed there. The resolution deplored the Government treatment of Moplah prisoners which resulted in asphyxiation incident—"an act of inhumanity unheard of in modern times and unworthy of a government that calls itself civilized."

Through another resolution, the Congress deplored the occurrence in Bombay on 17 November, 1921 which took place on the arrival of the Prince of Wales. They assured all parties and communities of their desire and determination to guard their rights to the fullest extent.

The Congress, through its resolutions, congratulated Mustafa Kamal Pasha on his victory over the Greeks, which led to the revision of the Treaty of Sevres. It further congratulated Baba Gurudutt Singh of the Komagatamaru who, after being a fugitive for seven years, had delivered himself voluntarily to the police. Another resolution called upon the non-believers in the principle of non-cooperation to undertake constructive work. Of the other resolutions, one related to the minor changes in the working of the constitution so as to make it incumbent on ex-presidents to sign the Congress pledge and treat the All India Congress Committee members, ex-officio delegates of the Congress as being under the old constitution.

Then came the tenth historic resolution from Maulana Hasrat Mohani who aimed at changing the Congress creed. He had moved it in the Subjects Committee where it was lost. Maulana Mohani's resolution said:

"The object of Indian National Congress is the attainment of Swaraj or complete Independence, free from all foreign control, by the people of India by all legitimate

and peaceful means.”¹⁰

Proposing the resolution Maulana Hasrat Mohani, who was the President of the Muslim League session at Ahmedabad that year, said that although they had been promised *Swaraj* last year, and the redress of the Khilafat and the Punjab wrongs within a year, they had so far achieved nothing of the sort. Therefore, it was no use sticking to the programme. If, by remaining within the British Empire or the British Commonwealth they could not get freedom, he felt that, if necessary, they should not hesitate to go out of it. Quoting the famous words of Lokamanya Tilak that ‘liberty is their birth-right’, the Maulana said that any Government which denied this elementary right of freedom of speech and freedom of action did not deserve allegiance of the people. Home Rule, Dominion Status or Colonial Self-Government could not be a substitute to them for their inborn liberty. A Government which could put into jail such distinguished leaders like Chittaranjan Das, Pandit Motilal Nehru, Lala Lajpat Rai and others, had forfeited all claim to receive respect from the people. Since the year end had not brought them *Swaraj*, nothing could prevent them from taking the only course left open, that is, of winning their freedom from all foreign control.

The forceful speech of Maulana Mohani moved the gathering to the extent that many delegates came up to the rostrum to lend their support to the resolution. R. Venkataram of *Bombay Chronicle*, Swami Kumaranath, Yakub Ali Khan of U.P., T. R. Alwar of Andhra were some of the leaders who pleaded for the need for a change in the Congress creed.

Hakim Ajmal Khan, then, called upon Mahatma Gandhi to speak on the resolution. Opposing it Mahatma Gandhi said that the proposition made by Maulana Mohani had grieved

10. *ibid.*, p. 50

him because it showed lack of responsibility. As responsible men and women, he asked the audience, to go to the days of Nagpur and Calcutta and remember what they had done only an hour ago when they had passed a resolution which actually contemplated a final settlement of the Khilafat and the Punjab wrongs and transference of the power from the hands of the bureaucracy into the hands of the people of India by certain definite means. Addressing the gathering Mahatmaji said:

“...Think, therefore, fifty times before you take a step which will rebound not to your credit, not to your advantage, but which may cause you irreparable injury. Let us first of all gather up our strength; let us first of all sound our own depths. Let us not go into waters whose depths we do not know, and this proposition of Mr. Hasrat Mohani lands you into depths unfathomable.”¹¹

Asking the people to reject the proposition, Mahatma Gandhi said:

“Are creeds such simple things like clothes which a man can change at will? For creeds people die, and for creeds people live from age to age. Are you going to change the creed which, with all deliberations and after great debate in Nagpur, you accepted? There was no limitation of one year when you accepted that creed. It is an extensive creed; it takes in all, the weakest and the strongest; and you will deny yourselves the privilege of clothing the weakest amongst yourselves with protection if you accept this limited creed of Maulana Hasrat Mohani which does not admit the weakest of your brethren.”¹²

Replying to the debate Maulana Mohani said that what he wanted to say was that they should keep independence before

11. *ibid.*, pp. 57-8.

12. *ibid.*

themselves as their destination. He did not mean to say that if anything less were given, they should reject it. One year had gone by and their wrongs were not yet redressed, and what guarantee was there that they would ever have the power to do so? He, therefore, wanted the Congress to have the ideal of complete Independence before it. Since Lokamanya Tilak had said that 'Swaraj is our birth-right', he did not see any harm in putting down complete Independence as their ideal.

Maulana Mohani's proposition had sparked a controversy but by then Mahatma Gandhi was already made 'the Sole Executive Authority of the Congress. His arguments were clinching. Concluding the debate, the President Hakim Ajmal Khan, therefore, said that the word *Swaraj* in the Congress creed was capable of two interpretations as was explained by Mahatma Gandhi. It was now for the Congressmen to adopt any one of these at any time according to their capacity. By his resolution Maulana Mohani wanted to fix only one of the interpretations and that was 'Complete Independence'.¹³

On votes being taken, the resolution of Maulana Mohani was rejected by an overwhelming majority. Though the proposition was lost at the Ahmedabad session it was pressed year after year until it was accepted as a resolution of the Congress at Madras in 1927 under the presidentship of M. A. Ansari—a few hours after the death of Hakim Ajmal Khan—and was ultimately embodied in the Congress creed itself at Lahore in 1929 under the presidentship of Jawaharlal Nehru.

Commenting upon the deliberations at the Ahmedabad session, the President Hakim Ajmal Khan said that by enthusiastically adopting the main and central resolution of Mahatma Gandhi the people were returning from the session with a very heavy responsibility on their shoulders. He was confident that they would be ever ready to discharge that responsibility. A

13. *ibid.*, pp. 58-60.

modest and humble man, throughout his life, Hakim Saheb begged an excuse from those who might have felt offended by his rulings or by his preventing them from speaking. They knew well that it was an unpleasant duty which a man, holding position of responsibility, had, at times, to perform.

Extending his thanks to the members of the Reception and other Committees, Hakim Saheb also thanked the male and female volunteers and their captains who had rendered the splendid and arduous national service. Summing up his concluding remarks, Hakim Saheb said :

“...we shall always cherish the sweet and loving memory of the convenience and the comforts...provided for us. Before we part, let me pray that the great Almighty may give us the strength to shoulder the heavy responsibilities with which we leave this pandal.”¹⁴

Hakim Saheb thus left an indelible mark upon the pages of history by conducting the deliberations of the Ahmedabad session of the Congress. Most of the resolutions passed by the Congress appeared to be the pieces of his own Presidential Address. Thus he was the most dominating figure at the Ahmedabad Congress. He ably conducted the proceedings in a very peaceful manner. Although Maulana Hasrat Mohani's resolution had created some stir yet Hakim Saheb handled it wisely. Proposing the vote of thanks to the chair the Congress leader, C. Vijayaraghavachariar said that Hakim Saheb fulfilled the hard task of managing the proceedings of the Congress Subjects Committee with great tact and good humour. His observations were short and to the point. “We may congratulate ourselves”, added Vijayaraghavachariar, “that out of our misfortune, that is, the arrest of Mr. Das, came our good fortune—the presidency of Hakim Ajmal Khan”. He further added:

14. *ibid.*, p. 61.

"...he is a firm believer in the gospel of the Hindu-Muslim unity without which our freedom is but *ignis-fatuas* light."¹⁵

Affirming what Vijayaraghavachariar had spoken, Swami Shradhananda said :

"My friend *Mashahir-ul-Mulk* Ajmal Khan is the soul of Delhi. I am working with him for the last three years. It is truly said that we are fortunate to have such a sober person to preside over our deliberations. I want to say one thing more. You had elected Deshbandhu Das to the presidential chair. He has by his own example given us the measure of the spirit of sacrifice in the country. From that stand-point and from that of Hindu-Muslim unity, Hakim Ajmal Khan is the only fittest person. I say it is solely due to this one personality that Hindu-Muslim unity is undisturbed in the whole of India. This is not an oratorical effusion. None is dearer to me than he nor any to him than I... May Hakimji be able to work with all his strength and may God spare him and may he unify us and carry on the work vigorously."¹⁶

Indeed, no tribute to Hakim Saheb could be better than these words of Swami Shradhananda.

Following the practice current during those days, the All India Khilafat Committee and the Muslim League also held their sessions at Ahmedabad simultaneously with that of the Indian National Congress. The Muslim League and the Khilafat Camps were called the Muslim Nagar. Their common pandals were put just adjacent to the Khadinagar and the Congress pandal with only a road intervening. This proximity facilitated the delegates and visitors of the three bodies to meet each other and exchange views freely with one another.

15. *ibid.*

16. *ibid.*, p. 62.

Hakim Ajmal Khan enjoyed the unique privilege of being the President of both the Khilafat Conference and the Indian National Congress. When Hakim Saheb took the presidential chair at the Khilafat Conference the attendance of the Muslims as well as non-Muslims was very large and included almost all the prominent leaders who were outside the jails. Hakim Saheb delivered his Presidential Address¹⁷ in chaste Urdu in which he reviewed the existing political situation in the country and discussed the Khilafat issue in the light of developments that took place in India and West Asia. Addressing the gathering Hakim Saheb remarked that since the last Khilafat Conference at Karachi, great changes had taken place in the Islamic World. He pointed out that the Islamic countries in Central Asia, Caucasia, Egypt, Persia, Afghanistan and above all, the regenerated Turkey gave promise of a greater future for Islam. India on the one side and Asia Minor on the other, in his view, were but two extreme links of the future Islamic federation, which was gradually but surely coming in shape joining all intermediate states in one great chain. The existing situation in Europe clearly indicated the great possibility of the emancipation of Asia from the political bondage and economic slavery of the West. In India the work had already begun.

Hakim Saheb, therefore, told his compatriots that under these circumstances the success of their efforts in the cause of Khilafat was bound to help the awakening of India and that the regeneration of Asia was closely bound up with the Khilafat issue which was, in as much as, the fore-runner of a general awakening of Asia. He was confident that the united India could not afford to ignore the developments in the Islamic world, especially because no less than seventy millions of people belonging to the Islamic faith formed a formidable part of

17. For extracts from the Presidential Address, See *The Indian Annual Register*, 1921-1922, Vol. I, pp. 127-134.

the Indian nation and had a share in its destiny. He was happy that India's neighbouring Islamic countries were already engaged in making efforts to attain complete independence. It would, in his view, checkmate the designs of imperialistic powers thus clearing the way for other Asiatic states to rise.

Referring to the Anglo-Afghan Treaty, Hakim Ajmal Khan congratulated the Afghan nation for its conclusion which, in a way, was a clear guarantee of complete independence in the near future. He expressed satisfaction over the consolidation of the Islamic states in Azerbaijan, Caucasia and Persia which was as significant as the great victory of the Kamalist forces over the Greeks, as it had completely smashed the British diplomacy in the region and induced France to conclude a separate treaty with Angora. This, in his opinion, had undermined the European alliance and at the same time gave an impetus to the efforts of those who clamoured for justice. He described the intense efforts being made to dissuade France from the Franco-Turk agreement, thus spoiling the prospects for peace and hoped that France would not fall a victim to the British intrigues. He believed that France was "absolutely disgusted and the cross-currents of European diplomacy and the sordid machinations of allied foreign offices in her own interests and also in the interest of peace and order." He posed a question by asking that now "that out of the three Allied Powers, France had already concluded a separate peace and Italy was sympathising with the Turks, who was there to oppose a complete revision of the Treaty of Sevres?"

Turning to issues at the home front, Hakim Saheb remarked that the continuous struggle between the bureaucracy and the people of India was a sheer show of brute force against the moral force. The effect was very significant since it added "to the moral courage of a suffering people who were gaining in strength and vitality with every fresh exhibition of repression by the Government."

Referring to the disorders that took place in Bombay on the arrival of the Prince of Wales, Hakim Ajmal Khan pointed out that they were initiated mainly by a few unscrupulous and ignorant men, who were never connected with the non-cooperation movement. He felt sorry that following these disturbances, the bureaucracy lost its head and the Viceroy, Lord Reading, himself failed to grasp the situation. "It was an irony" said Hakim Saheb, "that the very Government who wanted to keep the Prince above politics proved to be the sole cause of placing His Royal Highness in a false and awkward position. The bureaucracy, with its stage managing wanted to utilise the Royal visit in its own way. But, in its profound wisdom, it took a false step, and to the great regret of the people of India placed the Prince in a vortex of political struggle."

Hakim Saheb, in his presidential address, condemned the Government for its failure to prosecute and banish the individual offenders. Instead, all associations were declared unlawful. "This was a challenge", he declared, "thrown out to all national movements and activities and the nationalists could not afford to ignore it." Addressing the Conference he said that "non-violence and the capacity for suffering were the two essentials. They were the key to success. Every nationalist should consider it his duty to go to the jail and to suffer for the sake of right and justice and should religiously observe the basic principle of non-violence."

Referring to the suggestion for holding a Round Table Conference as advanced by Lord Ronaldshay, Hakim Saheb noted that the bureaucratic notions about an unlimited prestige and power were still the guiding factors for the British Government. Speaking on the attitude adopted by the Moderates and Liberal Party he expressed the hope that "sooner or later the Moderates would join hands with the nationalists."

Regarding the Moplah disturbances in Malabar, the Presi-

dent said that he was much grieved to find that the brave Moplahs transgressed the commandments of Islam by resorting to forcible conversions. But, fortunately, there were only a few who were guilty of committing such misdeeds and "the majority of the brave people was goaded into armed rebellion by an extremely high-handed administration." He sympathised with the sufferers, whether they were Moplahs or Hindus. Condemning the Government for its inhuman atrocities committed on Moplahs under Martial Law he expressed his shock over the railway van tragedy that took place on 21 November, 1921. This tragedy was a horrible episode in the suppression of the Moplah disturbances.¹⁸ He was sure that if the Government had allowed the nationalist leaders to enter the disturbed area, peace would have been restored.

Concluding his address, Hakim Saheb made a fervent appeal to the Muslims of India to carry on their "struggle with increasing energy and fortitude, never forgetting that they must always take their stand on their bed-rock of non-violence, love and truth."

Thus Hakim Ajmal Khan's presidential address touched upon all the important points that were relevant to the prevailing political situation. It manifested, besides his interest in the national politics, his firm grasp of the international political scenario. It was the best speech that he delivered on the matter from the Khilafat platform. In fact, Hakim Saheb was never interested in making lengthy speeches as is evident from his presidential address at the Congress session also. He had already made it clear in the Khilafat Conference that it was sheer waste of time to deliver long presidential speeches and

18. The Madras bound 77 Passenger train from Calicut to Madras carried in one of its closed iron wagons one hundred Moplah prisoners. On the arrival of the train at the Podanur Railway Station it was discovered that 66 of the prisoners had died of asphyxia.

that it was futile to dwell upon the different phases of the struggle which were known to all.

This Conference resolved to appeal to all Muslims to enrol themselves as volunteers and to disobey the official orders prohibiting public meetings, and hold such meetings provided they were certain that there was no possibility of any violence.

Here, too, he had to face the same predicament as he had encountered as President of the Congress. Maulana Hasrat Mohani came forward again to move his resolution on complete Independence. His resolution stated that the persistent policy and attitude of the British Government had proved that the British imperialism would not permit *Jazirat-ul-Arab* and the Islamic world to be completely free from the influence and control of Europeans, which meant that the Khilafat could not be free to the extent as enjoined in the *Shariat*. Thus it was necessary to endeavour to destroy British imperialism so that the permanent safety of the Khilafat and the prosperity of India could be secured. It, therefore, called upon the Muslims, with the support and co-operation of other peoples of India, to make the country completely free and win the *Swaraj*. Hakim Saheb thought it improper to hasten the passage of such a resolution. In the meantime a member of the Subjects Committee raised an objection to the consideration of Maulana Mohani's resolution on the ground that, according to the Khilafat constitution, no motion, which contemplated a change in the creed, could be taken as adopted unless it was voted for in the Subjects Committee by a two-third majority. Hakim Saheb upheld this objection and ruled the motion out of order. Some hot-headed elements, who refused to listen to reason, may have carried the conference with them if Hakim Ajmal Khan had not been firm. Maulana Mohani strongly protested against the ruling and pointed out that the president had manoeuvred to rule his motion out of order only in order to stem the declaration of *Swaraj* as the ultimate goal.

Hakim Saheb welcomed the criticism as he did not want to encourage unnecessary dissension among the rank and file. It would also have led to the division of national leaders into opposite camps. It was tactless, in his view, to raise the issue at the Khilafat Conference when it had already been defeated at the Congress session and both the organisations were working in close co-operation with each other. He, therefore, gladly allowed the critics to hurl criticism on him but was not prepared to lose the unity that the country had achieved with great difficulty. Addressing the gathering Hakim Saheb said:

“More difficult times lie ahead. We should face the oppression with greater vigour and determination. This war will result into the victory of the country. The Government is fed up with the arrest since there is no room left in the prison houses. But it is our duty to march forward swiftly towards the jails to teach the Government a lesson for the future that no Indian will now oblige it by obeying illegal commands.”¹⁹

Referring to the arrests of the leaders, like the Ali Brothers, C. R. Das, Maulana Azad, Lala Lajpat Rai, Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru and others Hakim Saheb said that it had created tremendous impact upon the country. Pointing to his own self Hakim Saheb added:

“...And the man who is presently talking to you is also going to tread the same path.”

Hakim Saheb made an appeal to the Muslims to collect fifty lakh rupees for the Angora fund. He condemned the government for subjecting the Moplahs to oppression which was far worse than that committed in the Punjab. There was none in the country who did not sympathise with them. But Hakim Saheb made it clear that:

19. *ibid.*

“We do not have any sympathy with those Moplahs who forcibly brought the Hindus to the fold of Islam and we express our hatred and shame towards them.”²⁰

These utterances revealed the mode of his thinking and confirmed his unflinching faith in the Hindu-Muslim unity. He was much disturbed by the oppressions committed on the Moplahs but never approved of the fanaticism of those who effected forcible conversions. Moreover, he regularly provided monetary help to the children of the Moplahs who were subjected to the tyranny of the British Government.

Hakim Ajmal Khan also attended the fourteenth session of the Muslim League which was being convened at Ahmedabad simultaneously with the Congress and the Khilafat. The League session was presided over by Maulana Hasrat Mohani who had failed to get his motion on complete independence passed by the Congress and the Khilafat. He moved this motion again under his own presidentship but it was ultimately lost. In fact, no political party and its leaders wanted to take a step which the Congress had disapproved earlier.

Soon after the conclusion of the Congress and Khilafat Conferences at Ahmedabad the British government, however, started examining the speeches made by the national leaders including Hakim Ajmal Khan. Consequently the Secretary of State for India telegraphically asked the Viceroy to consider the “propriety of action against Hakim Ajmal Khan in regard to his attacks on (the) Government’s treatment of Moplahs in his speech to the Khilafat Conference and in his Congress presidential address.” It led the Viceroy to examine carefully the speeches made by the Khilafat and Congress President whose remarks at the Khilafat Conference, in his view, “were mainly directed to the subject of forcible conversion which

20. *ibid.*

he condemned". There was, therefore, nothing in those remarks which could justify proceedings against him. So far as Hakim Saheb's presidential address at the Congress was concerned, the Viceroy did find some objectionable passages in it. "The most objectionable of these are the two sentences... in which he condemned (the) Government for provoking the Moplah rebellion and for the methods employed in suppressing it, and also hints that incidents as deplorable as the train tragedy are being kept secret." As regards the general question of the prosecution of Hakim Ajmal Khan, the Viceroy was of the view that it "would be an act of doubtful wisdom at the present moment. He has on the whole acted as a restraining force during the last few weeks." The Viceroy, however, referred the Secretary of State's telegram to the local governments and asked for their views.

Ultimately the Viceroy conveyed his views telegraphically to the Secretary of State for India on 14 February, 1922. It said: "We have carefully considered the possibility of taking action with regard to his (Hakim Ajmal Khan's) attacks on Government in (his) speeches... We do not consider that they contain any sufficient ground for prosecution to be successful. Moreover, Ajmal Khan belongs to the moderate wing of the Khilafat Party and so far has rather kept aloof from worse form of activity. We are of opinion, therefore, that it would be a mistake to institute proceedings, even though these were likely to be successful."²¹ Thus ended the controversy over the possible arrest and probable prosecution of the Congress and Khilafat President who had kept himself ready for any dire consequences after the Ahmedabad sessions of these organisations in December, 1921.

21. Home Political File No. 57/1921-1922. National Archives of India. New Delhi.

IX

The Pro-Changer

IMMEDIATELY AFTER the Ahmedabad session of the Congress Mahatma Gandhi gave an ultimatum to the Viceroy that he would launch a mass civil disobedience movement if the political prisoners were not released from jails and the repressive measures not repealed. He then chalked out a programme and decided to start the new movement in Bardoli district of Gujarat. But abruptly the non-cooperation movement had to be suspended in February 1922 due to an incident of violence in a village of Uttar Pradesh named Chauri Chaura where twenty two policemen were burnt alive by a violent mob of demonstrators. Although the suspension of the movement shocked the Indian people a constructive programme was chalked out at Bardoli which included promotion of *khadi*, organisation of village schools and panchayats, spread of literacy and elimination of untouchability etc. But the new Viceroy Lord Reading was certain that the resolution was the beginning of a new non-cooperation movement. Hence Mahatma Gandhi was arrested on 10 March, 1922 for writing objectionable articles in the *Young India*.

Addressing his first letter from the jail on 12 March, 1922, Mahatma Gandhi wrote to Hakim Ajmal Khan whom he had appointed sole the dictator that "we all now realise as we have never before realised that without . . . unity we cannot achieve our freedom and, I make bold to say that without that unity the Mussalmans of India cannot render the *Khilafat* all the aid they wish. Divided we must ever remain slaves. This unity,

therefore, cannot be a mere policy to be discarded when it does not suit us. We can discard it only when we are tired of *Swaraj*. Hindu-Muslim unity must be our creed to last for all time and under all circumstances." Mahatma Gandhi believed that the unity was unattainable without adopting non-violence as a firm policy. Clarifying his views he wrote further:

"...I call it a policy because it is limited to the preservation of that unity. But it follows that thirty crores of Hindus and Mussalmans united not for a time but for all time can defy all the powers of the world and should consider it a cowardly act to resort to violence in their dealings with the English administrators. We have hitherto feared them and their guns in our simplicity. The moment we realize our combined strength, we shall consider it unmanly to fear them and, therefore, ever to think of striking them..."¹

Besides the need of unity Mahatma Gandhi emphasised on the use of *Khaddar* and acceptance of non-violence and removal of untouchability as right means for the achievement of *Swaraj*.²

Replying to Mahatma Gandhi's letter Hakim Ajmal Khan agreed with him almost on all points. On the question of Hindu-Muslim unity Hakim Saheb wrote thus:

"I have no doubt that the secret of the progress of our country lies in the unity of the Hindus, the Mussalmans and other races of India. Such a unity should not be based on policy, for that, in my opinion, will only be a kind of armistice which might with difficulty be sufficient

1. *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XXIII, New Delhi, 1967, pp. 88-9.

2. *ibid.*, pp. 89-90.

for the present requirements. But I clearly see that the two great communities are coming closer to each other every day... I feel convinced that the country has found the road to real unity and will advance on it with steady step towards its goal. So highly do I prize the unity of races inhabiting our country that, if the country gave up all other activities and achieved that alone, I consider the *Khilafat* and the *Swaraj* questions automatically solved to our satisfaction. For the achievement of our objects is so intimately connected with this unity that to me the two appear identical.”³

In his view this unity could be achieved only by sincerity and purity of hearts. In fact the Indian people were to drive selfishness out of their minds. Although he did not expect these efforts to bear fruits immediately but he could hope to see them accomplished in future. Hakim Saheb had full faith in the creed of non-violence. To him the most striking proof of the success of non-violence was afforded by the people of North-West Frontier Province where it had the least chance of success. However, in his view, if some extra-ordinary or special causes had occasionally led to violence in some parts of the country such as the United Provinces they should not afford any ground for despair. In his opinion it was because of the dearth of national workers that the Congress creed could not sufficiently be explained to the people. Although Hakim Saheb agreed with Mahatma Gandhi that *Khaddar* was of invaluable help in the achievement of national object, still disagreed with the idea of picketing for popularising it.⁴

Referring to the question of untouchability Hakim Saheb wrote to Gandhiji thus:

“On the face of it, it might appear to be a communal

3. *ibid.*, p. 550.

4. *ibid.*, pp. 551-2.

question. It is really a national question, for, the country as a whole cannot progress until and unless its component parts progress too... it is, therefore, as much a Muslim question as Hindu. Similarly, if the Mussalmans are backward in education, every good Hindu should think of their educational advancement, for every step in that direction is a step towards the educational advancement of the country as a whole, even though it may superficially appear to be to the advantage of one community only. I hope, therefore, the country will pay to the question of untouchability the attention that it deserves.”⁵

In fact the suspension of non-cooperation movement had changed the mood of the people. Mahatma Gandhi, therefore, emphasised more on constructive programme the details of which he gave in his letter to Hakim Ajmal Khan. Hakim Saheb too, agreed with him. Concluding his reply he wrote to Gandhiji that :

“Bardoli and Delhi resolutions invite the country to concentrate its efforts on the constructive programme laid down by you. I hold that if we were to start civil disobedience, we would not have the necessary atmosphere required for the success of the constructive programme. It is very difficult to find a *via-media*. I trust the Working Committee will fully consider the question and adopt a proper and suitable course.”⁶

This correspondence between Hakim Ajmal Khan and Mahatma Gandhi served as the basis for the formation of the Congress Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee. Consequently Hakim Saheb convened the first meeting of the All India

5. *ibid.*, p. 552.

6. *ibid.*

Congress Committee on 7 June, 1922 in Lucknow. At the outset he reviewed the general political situation in the country and congratulated his countrymen for following perfect non-violence, inspite of the grave provocation caused by the arrest and incarceration of Mahatma Gandhi. Exhorting the members to maintain communal harmony, he asked them to present their views. There were distinctly two diametrically opposite view points. While the one group urged to have civil disobedience started in some form or the other, the other favoured the *status quo* to be maintained, of course, with an emphasis on constructive work. However, on 9th June, Pandit Motilal Nehru, who had lately been released from the jail, moved a consensus resolution which was ultimately passed by the Committee. The Committee, through the resolution, recorded that inspite of the suspension of all aggressive activities by the Congress, repression in a most severe form had been rampant in several parts of the country and the spirit of Congress workers had remained undaunted and the constructive programme laid down by the Committee was being faithfully carried out at great sacrifice everywhere. The Committee took note of the widespread feeling that, in view of the extremely unfair manner in which the policy of repression was being carried out by the Government, the country should be advised to resort to some form of civil disobedience to compel the Government to abandon their present policy and to agree to concede to the triple demand of the Congress. But the Committee was of opinion that the carrying out of the constructive programme would be the best preparation for any mass civil disobedience while it would also be the most effective means of furthering the objects of the Congress. The Committee, therefore, earnestly appealed to the country to concentrate all its efforts upon carrying out the constructive programme to the fullest extent and to endeavour to complete it within the shortest period possible. The Committee postponed till the next meeting to be held in August, the consideration of the question

whether civil disobedience in some form or other should or should not be taken up. The Committee requested in the meantime to nominate and authorise a few persons to tour round the country and to report on the situation in the next meeting.

The resolution could be termed as a compromise formula between the pleaders of civil disobedience and the advocates of constructive work. It did not take a final decision with regard to the re-launching of the movement and so the proposed committee was made responsible to gauge the spirit of the people and feel the pulse of the country whether they were prepared for it or not. Hakim Ajmal Khan, being the President of the Congress was, obviously, nominated as the chairman of the proposed Committee. He was authorised to appoint the members of this committee who could assist him in the task of knowing the feelings of the people. In spite of his preoccupations and ill-health, Hakim Saheb agreed to shoulder the responsibility of touring the country and meeting the people in general.

In pursuance of the resolution Hakim Saheb formed his famous Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee by nominating Motilal Nehru, C. Rajagopalachariar, Vithalbhai Patel, Seth Chotani, Jamnalal Bajaj and Dr. M. A. Ansari as its members. Hakim Ajmal Khan himself acted as chairman of the Committee. Jamnalal Bajaj did not accept the offer owing to his preoccupations with the All India Khadi Organisation. Sarojini Naidu was appointed in his place, but owing to ill-health she was prevented from taking an active part. Seth Chotani also was unable to take part in its meetings. Therefore, Kasturiranga Iyengar of the *Hindu*, Madras, replaced him on the Committee.

The Committee commenced its regular sittings at Delhi from July 1, 1922. The procedure followed in taking evidence was

fixed by the members who first called for written answers and then interviewed the witnesses. Accordingly, during its sittings, the Committee received 459 written answers to the questionnaire provided to the witnesses and interviewed 366 of them. In order to encourage witnesses to speak out their minds the interviews or oral examination took place in camera. Although the tour programme of the committee included the whole of British India but in the end, Bihar, Sind, Ajmer-Marwar and Central India had to be omitted. Instead, the witnesses from Ajmer-Marwar and Central India were examined at Ahmedabad. When the date for the Congress committee was postponed from 15 August to 15 September, the Enquiry Committee visited Patna also. The date for the AICC was further extended to enable the Committee to work with ease.

In the course of their tour the members of the Enquiry Committee addressed several public meetings. They were accorded warm welcome by mammoth crowds of men and women wherever they went. They were honoured by the municipalities of Jabalpur, Poona, Bijapur, Erode, Guntur and Bezawada, and numerous public bodies presented them with addresses. At some places they had to face some difficulties also such as at the Guntur railway station where on their arrival nearly 200 persons were arrested by the police.

However, the Committee concluded its work by the end of October 1922 and submitted its report to the All India Congress Committee which met in Calcutta on 20th November in the same year.⁷

On the issue of civil disobedience the Committee had unanimously arrived at the conclusion that under the existing situation the country was not prepared to embark upon a mass movement. But in view of the fact that a situation might arise in

7. For the Report of the Civil Disobedience Committee see *The Indian Annual Register*, 1923, pp. 43-6.

any part of the country demanding an immediate resort to mass civil disobedience of a limited character, such as, the breaking of a particular law or the non-payment of a particular tax for which the people were ready, in that case the Committee unanimously recommended that Provincial Committees be authorised to sanction such limited mass civil disobedience on their own responsibility if the conditions laid down by the AICC in that behalf were fulfilled.

The Committee further recommended unanimously the restoration of the Resolution passed by the AICC at Delhi on 4th and 5th November which gave Provincial Committees all the powers necessary to determine upon or resort to civil disobedience of any kind, irrespective of other resolutions on the subject.

As regards the Local Bodies, the Committee unanimously recommended that it was desirable for the non-cooperators to seek election to Municipalities and District or Local Boards with a view to facilitating the working of the constructive programme, but that no hard and fast rules, for the time being, be laid down to regulate or restrict the activities of non-cooperating members beyond advising them to act in harmony with local or provincial Congress organisations.

In connection with the boycott of Government educational institutions, the Committee was unanimous in recommending strict adherence to the Bardoli Resolution and suspended for the time being active propaganda calling upon boys to come out of schools and colleges. As required by that resolution, reliance was to be placed upon the superiority of National Schools and efforts were to be made for withdrawing students from government institutions and not upon picketing or other aggressive propaganda.

On the boycott of the Law Courts the Committee unanimously agreed that efforts should be concentrated on the esta-

ishment of *panchayats* and cultivation of a strong public opinion in their favour. It further recommended that existing disqualifications imposed on practising lawyers should be removed.

On a careful study of the Report one finds that the above five recommendations were made unanimously by the Enquiry Committee and that there was no voice of dissent.

But the recommendations on the remaining three issues led to a division of opinion among members of the Committee. On the issue of right of private defence, the majority of members, including the Chairman Hakim Ajmal Khan, Motilal Nehru, Dr. M. A. Ansari, C. Rajagopalachariar and Kasturiranga Iyengar recommended that individuals should be given full freedom to exercise the right within the limits defined by law, except when carrying on Congress work or on occasions directly arising therefrom subject always to the condition that it was not likely to lead to a general outburst of violence. The use of force in private defence and in some other cases, such as insult to religion, outrage on modesty of women or indecent assaults on boys and men was not prohibited under any circumstances. To this Vithalbhai Patel did not agree and appended a dissenting note to the Report which said that "full freedom to exercise the right within the limits defined by law should be reserved to non-cooperators subject only to the condition that it is not likely to lead a general outburst of violence and to no further conditions."

Similarly, the question of the boycott of British goods was recommended by a majority of members to be referred to a Committee of experts for a full report to be submitted before the meeting of the next Congress. To this only C. Rajagopalachariar put a dissenting note. He had no objection to the collection and examination of facts by experts, but, in his view, the acceptance of the principles by the All-India Cong-

ress Committee would mislead the nation and harm the movement.

All this leads one to believe that most of the findings of the Committee were unanimously accepted by the members and, if there was any dissent, it remained confined only to two minor issues. However, the most important of disagreements took place on the issue of the Council entry which became a bone of contention among its members. In fact, it was this difference of opinion that led later to the division of the Congressmen between the *Pro-Changers* and *No-Changers* and the formation of the Swaraj Party. Hakim Ajmal Khan, alongwith Motilal Nehru and Vithalbhai Patel, was of the view that the working of the Legislative Councils under the Government of India Act 1919 had put great obstacles to the redress of the *Khilafat* and the Punjab wrongs and the speedy attainment of *Swaraj*. It also caused great misery and hardship to the people which should be taken into consideration by the Congress and the *Khilafat* at their ensuing sessions at Gaya. The Committee of the three, therefore, suggested that the non-cooperators should contest the election on the issue of the redress of the Punjab and *Khilafat* wrongs and the demand for immediate *Swaraj*, and make every endeavour to be returned in majority. If the non-cooperators were returned in majority large enough to obstruct the working, they should, after taking their seats, leave the Council Chamber en bloc and take no part in the proceedings for the rest of the term. They should attend the council occasionally only for the purpose of preventing vacancies. This act of the non-cooperators was sure to materially reduce the strength of the Council. If the non-cooperators were returned in a majority which was not large enough to prevent a quorum they should oppose every measure of the Government including the budget. The three members further suggested that as the new Councils were not to assemble till January 1924, the Congress session

of 1923 should be held during the first instead of the last week of December and the matter be again brought up for the issue of final mandate by the Congress in view of the election.

To these recommendations made by Hakim Ajmal Khan, the remaining three members of the Congress i.e. M.A. Ansari, C. Rajagopalachariar and S. Kasturiranga Iyengar did not agree. They emphatically made it clear that there should be no change of the Congress programme in respect of the boycott of the Councils. In their view the proposal of entry into the Councils involved a distinct violation of the principle of non-cooperation and a clear departure from the policy of the Congress which was inaugurated in the Calcutta special session of 1920 and was later re-affirmed at Nagpur and Ahmedabad.

On the other hand, as already mentioned, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Motilal Nehru and Vithalbhair Patel were of the view that "the only fitting answer to the Government for its uncontrolled repression and the only effective means to save the constructive work from coming to a standstill was to smash the Councils". In their view the position was materially different from that which existed at the commencement of the non-cooperation campaign and during its earlier stages. Times had altogether changed, and with it the circumstances too had altered. The period of the struggle was indefinitely prolonged. They therefore, decided to adjust their programme accordingly.

Hakim Ajmal Khan and his two colleagues on the Committee thought that the country had passed through the first and entered upon the second phase of non-cooperation. The first ended with the Bardoli decisions and the arrest and imprisonment of Mahatma Gandhi. The second one commenced with the triumph of non-violence during the succeeding months. Hakim Saheb, therefore, suggested: "knock these Councils over the head, and you will accomplish what millions spent in

foreign propaganda can not achieve. Wreck the reforms and you will smash at one blow the huge superstructure of world-wide deception which has cost millions to build up."

The three-men pro-entry group of the Committee was convinced that "it will be a political blunder to throw the opportunity which is about to offer itself . . . If we are wrong in expecting a majority we lose little by a trial of strength at the polls but gain much by promoting the constructive work to an extent otherwise impossible, at least, in the provinces where repression reigns supreme. In case we are debarred from entering the contest we lose even less but demolish all pretence for the unrepresentative character of the Councils. If, however, our colleagues are wrong and the opportunity is allowed to slip by, we must be prepared to submit to existing conditions for another three years; and he will be a bold prophet who can say what will happen meanwhile."

While submitting the Report and making recommendations Hakim Ajmal Khan further put a separate note on the question of entry into the Councils. It said:

"The constructive programme, being the basis of all our actions, we should have recommended nothing else but the working of it. As I cannot, however, shut my eyes to the obvious fact that with the exception of a few provinces, we are not only not making any progress in this direction, but are actually going backwards. I, therefore, recommend entry into the Councils with the sole object of proving that the Reforms Scheme is useless, and with a view only to make its working impossible. If the whole of our Congress organisation, from top to bottom, were to take up the constructive programme in right earnest and push it through with a firm determination, which I very much doubt it would, I believe, we should not feel

the necessity of having to call to our aid any other stimulant, such as entry into the Councils.”⁸

Though a majority of witnesses did not agree to the Council-entry programme, Hakim Ajmal Khan voted in its favour. He thought it proper to offer advice to contest elections and capture the legislatures which had so far worked against the interest of the Punjab and *Khilafat* demands and the *Swaraj*. He did not mind the disagreement with his intimate friend and close associate Dr Ansari who had joined hands with C. Rajagopalachariar and Kasturiranga Iyengar. He had in view a larger canvas and was unwilling to sacrifice the national interests for the sake of personal friendship with one, who was equally devoted to the cause of his motherland. In fact, it was a sincere and honest difference of opinion which later created a serious rift in the party.

When the Congress Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee was being constituted, the *Khilafat* Committee also formed an Enquiry Committee of its own to investigate into the political situation in the country.⁹ This Committee had been constituted at the instance of Hakim Ajmal Khan who was the President of the *Khilafat* Committee for that year. He did not nominate himself as its member since he was already heading the Congress Enquiry Committee, which in his view covered comparatively a larger scope. But he did not pressurise the members of the *Khilafat* Enquiry Committee to support the Council-entry programme. He left the members free to collect evidence and to reach independent conclusions in the light of the comments offered by the witnesses. Accordingly the *Khilafat* Committee recorded the evidence of 211 witnesses during its tour of 40 days and issued its 67-pages report on 10 November, 1922 under the signatures of Maulana Abdul

8. *ibid.*

9. *ibid.*, pp. 53-6.

Majid, Moulvi Abdul Qadir, T.A.K. Sherwani, Moazzam Ali, Nawab Ismail Khan and Zahoor Ahmed. Unlike the Congress report, all the Khilafat signatories were unanimous in their recommendations of total boycott of Councils, schools and British goods. As regards the Council entry-programme only Zahoor Ahmed recorded a note of dissent favouring such entry.

Hakim Ajmal Khan not only recommended the Council-entry in the Report of the Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee but also made efforts to see it through at the Congress Committee meetings. He whole-heartedly supported it at the All India Congress Committee in Calcutta in November, 1922 where the Report of the Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee was considered. It was here that the Congress placed on record its "grateful appreciation of the services rendered to the nation during the critical juncture in its affairs by the members of the Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee" who discharged their duties "with devotion, with untiring energy and a sacrifice hard to appraise." Hakim Saheb further supported the resolution at the Gaya session of the Congress in December that year and advanced arguments in favour of his views.

When the decision of the *Jamiat-ul-Ulama* against Council-entry was being interpreted in many ways, Hakim Saheb said nothing on the question of Council-entry being religious or otherwise. He made an effort to set at rest the apprehensions arising in the minds of the Muslims by saying that it was not a *fatwa* in the absence of a unanimity among the *Ulama*. However, the protracted discussions at Gaya failed to convince the majority of members about the necessity of the Council-entry and led to the resignation of C.R. Das as Congress President and the formation of the Swaraj-Khilafat Party. The pro-council elements then issued the following manifesto to this effect :

"Whereas we are convinced that several important items

in the programme of work adopted by the Gaya session of the Indian National Congress are not conducive to the speedy attainment of *Swaraj* and we are further of opinion that several other important items have been rejected, we do hereby form and constitute ourselves into a party within the Congress. This party will be called the Congress-Khilafat-Swaraj Party. It accepts the creed of the Congress, viz., the attainment of *Swaraj* by all peaceful and legitimate means and also the principle of non-violent non-cooperation. We hereby appoint Mr. C.R. Das as the leader of the party and Pandit Motilal Nehru, B.N.Sasmal, Vithalbhai Patel and Mr Choudhry Khaliquz Zaman as the secretaries. This party shall have its own organisation and programme of work, the details of which will be issued in the course of January next. The President and the Secretaries, with power to coopt., are hereby appointed to frame the programme and regulations to be submitted to the members of the party at a meeting to be held at such time and place as may be notified thereafter by the Secretaries.”¹⁰

Hakim Ajmal Khan was a prominent and distinguished signatory to this manifesto alongwith other stalwarts of Congress whom he mobilised in favour of the Council-entry. This gave him the unique distinction of becoming one of the founders of the Swaraj Party with such acknowledged leaders as C.R. Das, Motilal Nehru and Vithalbhai Patel. In fact, the recommendations of the three leaders who opted for a change in favour of the Council-entry served as the basis for the formation of the Swaraj Party. Hakim Saheb was, later, consulted by Maulana Azad to bring about a compromise between the *No-Changers* and *Pro-Changers*, and a message to this effect was sent on 12 February, 1923. When the rift in the Congress

10. *ibid.*, p. 217.

widened, Hakim Ajmal Khan and Motilal Nehru decided not to attend the meeting of the All India Congress Committee which was being held in Bombay. They thought that their presence could not serve any purpose so they regretted their inability to attend the meeting, but hoped that the Committee would be guided by better feelings without indulging in acrimony. The Swaraj Party, however, took a concrete shape later when it fought elections and played a significant role in the legislative politics of our country. It is significant that Hakim Saheb himself never aspired to be a legislator, perhaps, because he was too engaged in other constructive activities, such as the Jamia Millia Islamia, Tibbia College, Tibbi Conference and the Hindu-Muslim unity.

The Peace-Maker

BESIDES THE rift between the *Pro-Changers* and *No-Changers* the country was torn by communal strife in the third decade of the present century. However, negotiations went on to reach a rapprochement between the *No-Changers* and the *Swarajists* but the misunderstandings continued to increase between the two communities which left a trail of violence in different parts of the country. This communal holocaust had wrecked all that had been done to forge the Hindu-Muslim unity. Even Hakim Ajmal Khan, who was a founder member of the Swaraj Party, himself became a target of the communal elements of the Indian society. But Hakim Sahab was neither swayed nor subdued by the activities of a handful of anti-social elements dancing to the tune of the British Government which was determined to crush the spirit of the Indians with the virus of communalism. He continued his incessant efforts to bridge the ever-widening chasm between the two communities and strengthen the bonds of love.

Hakim Sahab took interest in the *Guru-ka-Bagh* tragedy and personally visited the troubled spot to look into the matter. The Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee was a reformist group of Sikhs called the *Akalis*. They wanted to capture the Gurudwaras which were under the control of *Udasis* who were favoured by the *Mahants*. The *Akalis* employed *Satyagraha* as a weapon and cut down a tree in the compound of the *Guru-ka-Bagh* shrine. On a complaint from the *Mahant* the *Akali Jats* were severely beaten by the police but they

presented an excellent example of passive resistance and patiently tolerated the police *lathis*. They were arrested, beaten and fined but did not deter from the path of *Satyagraha*. On return from Amritsar Hakim Saheb admired the high spirit with which the *Akalis* faced the police suppression and termed it as the triumph of non-violence.

Multan witnessed a communal riot in 1922, which broke out when a procession of the *Tazias* on the eve of Muharram was being taken out. The atmosphere was already tense and the stoning at the procession added fuel to the fire. Hakim Ajmal Khan and Madan Mohan Malaviya visited Multan to restore peace in the city. They succeeded to a great extent to forge unity between the Hindus and Muslims. But when Hakim Ajmal Khan visited the city for the second time accompanied by Patel, Maulana Azad and T.A.K. Sherwani, he found the atmosphere totally changed to the advantage of the communalists. The Hindus were demanding punitive tax from the Muslims who had by that time gone under the spell of the British Government and so they rejected the appeal for reaching an understanding with the Hindus. Hakim Saheb, therefore, paid the Hindu victims of the riot some amount of money from the Khilafat relief fund and disappointedly returned to Delhi. It was the first time that Hakim Saheb had failed in his efforts to bring the two communities together. His sorrowful note could be noted at the Punjab Provincial Conference where he spoke thus:

“Everyone of you claims to be struggling for the *Swaraj*. To all the Muslims, who are present here, I explicitly make it clear that if you leave out the issue of the *Swaraj*, in no way you can solve the *Khilafat* problem. The *Swaraj* cannot be achieved without the unity of the Hindus and the Muslims. Keeping such a common object in view can you ever afford to fight against each other? If you fail to check this poison of communal strife, it would affect the entire country. And it would result in your perpetual sert-

dom. If the wind of disunity blows throughout the country then it should be remembered that Punjab alone would be held responsible for it.”¹

In another statement issued to the press Hakim Saheb said:

“Would the responsible Hindus and Muslims of the Punjab be happy if the present united power of the country was badly hurt and such important problems as the *Swaraj* and *Khilafat* became a victim to the disunity among the communities.

“I warn the brethren of the Punjab that, if they fail in improving the condition of their province at the earliest, its effects would be so adverse that it may not be repaired for years to come and our adversaries may get an opportunity of laughing at our miserable failure.”²

In fact, the press was also to some extent responsible for fanning the communal feelings in the country. It did not act with restraint and published stories of riots that vitiated the atmosphere. Hakim Ajmal Khan had always called upon the journalists not to publish exaggerated accounts of communal violence that had spoilt the harmony in the country. Addressing the journalists of the Punjab, Hakim Saheb commented thus:

“I feel that the Punjab press had adopted the same method of functioning which it had once given up itself by considering it against the lofty objects of the country. Let the Punjab press which is the most powerful in the Indian provinces not forget the delicate situation that exists in the country to day. It should always keep in view the duty and responsibility of securing and preserving unity bet-

1. Qazi Mohd. Abdul Ghaffar, *Hayat-i-Ajmal*, Aligarh, 1950. pp. 276-7.

2. *ibid.*, p. 277.

ween the two communities for a real and greater advantage.”³

On 9th and 10th of September a serious riot broke out in Kohat in North-West Frontier Province. The press came out with reports of unimaginable outrages committed on the Hindus. Mahatma Gandhi was so much disturbed by these communal holocausts that he undertook a 21-day fast from 18 September to 8 October, 1924 at the residence of Maulana Mohammad Ali. His fast stirred the conscience of the Hindu and Muslim leaders who flocked round the fasting Mahatma to persuade him not to undergo such an ordeal which could result in an unthinkable disaster. But the man who had devoted himself to the noble cause of communal harmony was not deterred from his determination and went on with the fast. Hakim Ajmal Khan was so much shocked that he thought of undertaking a fast himself alongwith the Mahatma but his friends did not allow him to do so as he had already been ailing all through these days.

Soon after the observance of fast by Mahatma Gandhi nearly 300 leading figures of Indian polity assembled at Delhi from 26 September to 2 October, 1924. They belonged to all the communities and attended the Unity Conference of which one of the sponsors was Hakim Ajmal Khan himself.

The Conference requested Mahatma Gandhi to break his fast so that they could have the benefit of his “co-operation, advice and guidance in deciding upon the speediest means of effectively checking the evil which was fast over spreading the country.”⁴

The Conference appointed a Subjects Committee for its successful deliberations with Hakim Ajmal Khan as its member.

3. *ibid.*, p. 278.

4. *The Indian Quarterly Register*, 1924, Vol. II, p. 158.

He was appointed a member of the eleven-member sub-committee also which was responsible for considering the various resolutions and preparing their final drafts. Accordingly this Committee drafted several resolutions on press fomenting prejudices, acts of vandalism to mosques, communal harmony, communal ill-will and communal dissensions.

The Conference appointed a Central National *Panchayat* with Mahatma Gandhi as Chairman and Convener and Hakim Ajmal Khan, G. K. Nariman, Dr. S. K. Dutta and Master Sunder Singh as members. It empowered the *Panchayat* to organise and appoint local *panchayats*, in consultation with the local representatives of different communities to inquire into and settle all disputes and differences including the recent occurrences.

Addressing the members of the Conference, Hakim Ajmal Khan said:

“Communal strife has weakened the Indian nation. Many people, while strongly condemning these quarrels, are taking part in one way or the other. The first and foremost question before the Hindus and Mussalmans is to attain *Swaraj*. The past history of these great communities was glorious, but what of the present? Asia is trying to free herself from the domination of Europe and India is an essential part of Asia. What part has these communities played in the awakening of Asia? The only thing they have to their credit is communal strife.”⁵

Hakim Saheb considered that the duties of Mussalmans towards Hindus were great and if Hindus desired to attain *Swaraj*, it was the duty of the Mussalmans to help them. So long as India did not enjoy complete freedom, Afghanistan, Persia, Egypt, Turkey and the *Jazirat-ul-Arab* could not be made

5. *ibid.*

free. The Mussalmans would not be doing any service to the cause of Islam if they continued to quarrel in the manner they had been doing in the name of religion. Religion should be put aside in these quarrels. They should not drag religion into them and should therefore, fight against all satanic influences. Islam taught them not only to free themselves but also to help their neighbours to attain similar freedom.

Hakim Saheb was glad that after five days' deliberations the representatives of different communities had come to an understanding, but he made it clear that mere passing of resolutions was not enough. It was a change of heart and spirit that was essentially required in such matters.

Addressing the various communities Hakim Saheb said that they must forget all incidents of the past and prepare themselves for the attainment of *Swaraj* which was their ultimate goal. He hoped that the spirit of toleration displayed in the Subjects Committee would be followed in the open conference and outside it also. He opined that if there remained a few more differences still unsettled they would settle them when India attained *Swaraj*.

Mahatma Gandhi expressed satisfaction and pleasure over the resolution adopted by the Unity Conference. He urged the meeting to transmute all mutual affection of which the resolution was an index into solid and true work for unity for which they had assembled. He said, however, that his fast did not depend on the passing of the resolutions.

That was a penance. He would break it only if the life was in danger. Before breaking the fast on 8 October, 1924, Mahatma Gandhi spoke to the audience. He said:

“Hindu-Muslim unity is not a new interest with me. It has been my chief concern for 30 years, but I have not yet succeeded in achieving it. I do not know what is the

will of God. You know how originally my vow consisted of two parts.”⁶

Addressing the Muslims in general through Hakim Ajmal Khan and Maulana Mohammad Ali, Gandhiji said:

“Today I beseech you to promise that you will, if necessary, lay down your life for the sake of Hindu-Muslim unity. For me Hindustan would be meaningless if that unity is not achieved, and I make bold to say the same thing about Islam. We ought to be able to live together. The Hindus must be able to offer their worship in perfect freedom in their temples, and so should Mussalmans be able to say their *Azaan* and prayers with equal freedom in their mosques. If we can't ensure this elemental freedom of worship, then neither Hinduism nor Islam has any meaning. I want this promise from you and I know I have it, but as I am about to break my fast, I am so weighed down with the sense of responsibility that I am asking you to renew the pledge.”⁷

In his reply Hakim Ajmal Khan expressed his belief that all the labours of Mahatma Gandhi would bear fruit, and assured him that the Mussalmans were prepared to work hand in hand with him in such a sacred cause and to give up all other work in preference to the work of Hindu-Muslim unity. If it was necessary, he renewed the promise on behalf of his community.

In his speech Maulana Abul Kalam Azad affirmed that Hakim Ajmal Khan had already given the promise on behalf of all the Mussalmans present on the occasion. He himself had no doubt that Hindu-Muslim unity would be achieved without any delay. One could do no more than laying down

6. *ibid.*, p. 160.

7. *ibid.*

one's life for it and that he was prepared to do it.

Thereupon Mahatma Gandhi broke his fast on its completion of the 21st day.

Hakim Ajmal Khan had tried his best to make the conference a success. In spite of his illness and, despite the advice of the physicians, he underwent strains and exertions during its deliberations. Since he represented the entire Muslim community his responsibility increased all the more. Dr. Ansari records in his diary that "as usual there were spirited speeches made by the leaders in open sessions of the conference but, in fact the real business was transacted only at the meetings of the sub-committee and the sittings that commenced at Hakim Ajmal Khan's residence. It was an ordeal for him to bring the people to one point of view. Some time the Hindu leaders became adamant and Hakim Saheb persuaded them to be a little moderate and sometimes the Muslim leaders got displeased but were compelled by Hakim Saheb to agree to a certain point. The week-long efforts thus resulted in favour of agreed resolutions which were passed by the Unity Conference."⁸

But it was indeed a misfortune for the country that the spirit of resolutions was never observed by the concerned parties and the decisions of the conference were soon forgotten. In fact the atmosphere of the country was vitiated by the *Shuddhi* and *Sangathan* movements among the Hindus and the *Tabligh* and *Tanzeem*⁹ among the Muslims which resulted in serious communal riots in different parts of the country. Mahatma Gandhi and Maulana Shaukat Ali later visited Rawalpindi and Kohat but in their respective reports they differed on the cause of riot which widened the gulf between them.

Referring to these differences Mahatma Gandhi wrote in

8. Qazi Mohd. Abdul Ghaffar, *op. cit.*, pp. 310-11.

9. *ibid.*, pp. 286-7.

the columns of the *Young India*:

“There are material differences between us on the inferences we have drawn from the same facts. There are differences, too, in the degree of reliance we have placed upon the evidence given to us by witnesses. When we discovered the differences between us both felt grieved and tried to come nearer each other. We even referred our differences to Hakim Saheb and Dr. Ansari for guidance. Fortunately, Pandit Motilalji was present at our discussions. We could find nothing in the discussion to induce to make any radical alteration in our view points. These discussions took place at Delhi... we also examined the suggestions made by Hakim Saheb and supported to an extent by Pandit Motilalji not to publish the statements...”¹⁰

Although Hakim Saheb and Motilal Nehru had advised Mahatma Gandhi not to bring to surface his differences with Maulana Shaukat Ali by publishing the report of the Kohat riots but ultimately he published it for the public to know that both had “spared no pains to come near each other”. On the publication of this report Maulana Shaukat Ali reacted adversely and came out with his own statement. It created a gulf between Mahatma Gandhi and Shaukat Ali which shocked Hakim Saheb who was not in favour of the publication of the report.

During this period Mahatma Gandhi, who presided over the deliberations of the Congress at Belgaum in December, 1924, advised to suspend non-cooperation as the nation was not ready for it. He thus allowed “the Swaraj Party to use the name of the Congress in regard to the Council programme.”

Although Hakim Ajmal Khan was a disappointed person,

10. *The Young India*, 26 March, 1925.

he did not turn away from the realities of life and continued to contribute to the political life of the country in all possible manner. Throughout the last month of 1924, he remained busy in providing relief to the flood-affected victims of Delhi and nearby areas. Afterwards he attended the All Parties Conference in Delhi on 23 January, 1925 which was chaired by Mahatma Gandhi who appointed a sub-committee to suggest the area of agreement between the Hindus and Muslims and among all the political parties and also drew up a scheme of *Swaraj*. Hakim Ajmal Khan also was appointed a member of the Committee.

At a time when Hakim Saheb was exhorting the people of the Punjab to live peacefully, came the news of the victory of the forces of Mustafa Kamal in Turkey. Defeating the Greeks he had occupied Smyrna, Thrace and Constantinople. Hakim Saheb with many other national leaders greeted the victor and celebrated in Delhi the victory of the Turkish forces. But soon the new regime declared Turkey a republic and ousted the Sultan from the territory, although the Caliphate was allowed to stay. In February 1924 when a deputation of the Turkish Red Crescent visited India, Hakim Saheb introduced it to the people of Delhi in a general meeting and invited its members to his residence, Sharif Manzil. During the exchange of thoughts the deputation assured the Indian Muslims that the Turkish monarchy had been done away with only to achieve the high ideals of republican government and that the institution of the Caliph would remain intact. But, while the deputation was still present in India, Mustafa Kamal abolished the *Khilafat* in March 1924 and declared Turkey a secular country. And thus ended the fourteen-century-old religious institution for the preservation of which the Muslims of India had been launching such a massive movement. The Indian Muslims received a severe shock but Hakim Saheb was of the opinion that the Turkish leadership was busy making a novel though un-

certain experiment, and may succeed at least in preserving their own nation and treading on the path of progress. He had insisted that the nations should always chalk out their own plans according to their needs and take decisions to suit their objectives. Hakim Saheb justified the steps taken by the Turkish nation in regard to *Khilafat* and asked the Indian Muslims to leave Turkey to follow her own course of events.

When, therefore, the Khilafat Committee met at Delhi in June, Hakim Saheb called upon its members not to criticise or condemn the decisions of the Ankara Government. He suggested that, if the Muslims really desired to have an exchange of ideas with the Turks, a deputation could be sent to Turkey to see the things for themselves. Hence a delegation was designated under the chairmanship of Hakim Saheb to visit Turkey. However, the Turkish Government did not approve of the idea and sent a message through the British Government that, if the delegation wished to visit Turkey on a cordial and friendly mission, it was most welcome but, if it intended to discuss the *Khilafat* issue, it need not come as the Government of Ankara would not like to talk to others in its internal affairs. The proposed delegation, therefore, cancelled its proposed visit to Turkey and thus the fate of the *Khilafat* issue was sealed for ever.

In the meantime Abdul Aziz Ibn-e-Saud of Najd occupied the *Jazirat-ul-Arab* ousting Sharif Husain of Mecca. This led to the formation of two groups among the Muslims of India out of whom one supported Sharif Husain whereas the other favoured Ibn-e-Saud. The supporters of Sharif Husain hurled abuses at Ibn-e-Saud whom they condemned as *Kafir*. In fact, Ibn-e-Saud was a believer of the purity of Islam and did away with such rituals and customs as had distorted its real image. Hakim Saheb condemned this schism among the Muslims and disapproved the acts of those who criticised Ibn-e-Saud. Addressing the Muslims from the Jama Masjid of Delhi on 19 December, 1924 Hakim Saheb spoke thus:

“You all know that Sultan Ibn-e-Saud has occupied *Makah Muazzama* by ousting Sharif Husain’s family from there. But I am surprised to see that the *fatwas* (religious decrees) are being issued against the Najdis who fully believe in the unity of God and are the true followers of the *Ahadis*—thereby creating dissensions in Islam. Nothing could be inferred by it except that the difficult times for the Muslims have not yet been over. The Muslim states are being eliminated and they themselves are facing crises but their differences and strifes do not come to an end. Some Ulama as well as other people have also been launching propaganda against the Najdis. Let the Maulvis forgive me for saying that the people who have indulged in carrying on such propaganda are either short-sighted or there is somebody else at their back.”¹¹

To find out the actual condition the Khilafat Committee, however, deputed in December 1924 a delegation under Maulana Sulaiman Nadvi to visit Hejaz, but on 23rd February, 1925 it returned to Delhi with great disappointment. The delegation was supposed to have talks with Sultan Ibn-e-Saud in order to convince and persuade him to establish a republic in Hejaz, but it was not allowed to proceed farther than Jeddah which was still in full control of Ali, the son of Sharif Husain. In fact, Hakim Saheb was against sending any delegation to Hejaz. He was of opinion that the Indian Muslims should learn a lesson from their failure in matters of Turkey and should support Ibn-e-Saud without insisting on the establishment of a republic in Hejaz. However, he believed in the fact that the constitutional matters of Hejaz should be decided in a *Mutamar-i-Islami*. He did not find any justification in keeping the Khilafat Committee alive when the institution of *Khilafat* itself had been abolished in

11. Qazi Mohd. Abdul Ghaffar, *op. cit.*, pp. 314-5.

Turkey. The failure of the delegation only confirmed the line of Hakim Saheb's thinking.

However, later when Hakim Ajmal Khan was away in Europe, the Indian Muslims restlessly and anxiously watched the developments that took place in Hejaz, then under the control of Ibn-e-Saud. He not only showed scant respect to the graves of renowned personalities but also demolished them openly as he thought it was un-Islamic to pay them any homage. This divided the Indian Muslims again into two factions. One of them supported Ibn-e-Saud whereas the other condemned him for desecrating the remnant of the holy figures of Islam.

In a letter to Hakim Saheb Ibn-e-Saud wrote that he was neither interested in establishing his hegemony over Hejaz nor in owning the territory. He only intended to look after its administration until the people of Hejaz elected a ruler for themselves and it came to be controlled by the respected Islamic organisations and nations. He also gave out the conditions which he thought proper to enter into a contract with the Islamic world. But soon after the victory of Saudi forces over Jeddah in December 1925, Ibn-e-Saud was declared as the Sultan of Hejaz in January 1926. Clarifying his position Ibn-e-Saud wrote to the President of the Jamiat-ul-Ulama, Delhi, that the people of Hejaz had elected him unanimously as the king and he was compelled to yield to their wishes which otherwise would have created a situation beyond his control. And thus the controversy among the pro-Saud and anti-Saud factions of Indian Muslims became meaningless and thus ended for ever. Hakim Saheb also did not pursue the matter further and concentrated his energies on the problems at the domestic front.

The Traveller

AFTER A severe attack of colic pain and the failure in frogging communal unity in the country, Hakim Ajmal Khan felt much dejected. He, therefore, decided on the advice of his physicians to go abroad for a change and to consult the medical experts there. Although Hakim Saheb was born with a silver spoon in his mouth and had most of the rulers of the princely states as his patients, he had to sell out a portion of his property to undertake a tour of Europe. Ultimately he set out on his journey on 10 April, 1925, accompanied by Dr M.A. Ansari who was equally frustrated with the existing communal situation in the country. It was the third time that Hakim Saheb had gone abroad.

Ajmal Khan's first foreign tour took place in 1905 when he started on the 11th March for Iraq. This journey was undertaken for a change since he had developed heart trouble due to severe over-exertion in the affairs of the Tibbia School and other activities following the death of his elder brother. During this journey he had visited Baghdad, Alkifi and Basrah and all the religious and historical places such as Kufa, Najaf and Kerbala. It was a very brief journey and did not extend beyond the territory of Mesopotamia, as Iraq was called then.

Hakim Ajmal Khan had paid a visit to Europe in May 1911 with a view to taking rest and to study the advanced researches made in the field of medicine and surgery so that he could develop the indigenous system of medicine on the same lines. During this tour he attended the coronation ceremony of King George V

and was awarded a silver medal. Besides England, he visited France, Germany and Austria and inspected the reputed hospitals and medical research centres which gave him an insight into the latest researches and studies in the medical world. He also met several luminaries of the medical science and developed life-long relations with them. Describing Hakim Saheb's visit abroad the *Mujalla-i-Tibbia* had remarked thus :

“Hakim Saheb is the first individual in India whom the people found busy propagating Asia's ancient system of medicine on the soil of Europe. Again he is the first Indian who was accorded a rousing reception everywhere in Europe as a great physician. During this tour he not only had formal meetings with the people but also revealed to the Europeans the value of the Islamic and the *Vedic* systems of medicine. He is the first able Indian physician who achieved such great success in Europe.”¹

In fact, Hakim Saheb earned the friendship of many an important figure during this journey. His first meeting with Dr M.A. Ansari took place in London which developed into a life-long companionship in all the matters—personal, social, educational, economic and political. He also met Abdul Majeed Khwaja in London, who later assisted Hakim Saheb in the affairs of the Jamia Millia Islamia and all other activities which he indulged in as a national leader.

On way back from Europe Hakim Saheb stayed for some-time in Constantinople from where he planned to visit Iraq and Syria with Nawab Sultan Jehan Begum of Bhopal but he had to return to India, cutting short his journey, following a telegraphic message that a theft had been committed at his residence in Delhi.

The third journey Hakim Ajmal Khan undertook was to

1. Qazi Mohd. Abdul Ghaffar, *Hayat-i-Ajmal*, Aligarh, 1950. p. 97.

lessen the communal tensions that had been mounting in India. He wanted to have a change and also to have consultations with the western physicians for his own ailment. The ship that Hakim Saheb boarded was carrying the Viceroy Lord Reading also and so the people thought that they would have an exchange of views on political scenario. But Hakim Saheb was altogether in a different mood and did not see the Viceroy except exchanging with him the usual courtesies.

On reaching the shores of Port Said, Hakim Saheb was greeted by a number of Egyptian dignitaries. They informed him that the Egyptians were also divided on the Khilafat issue. One faction supported the King of Egypt as Caliph whereas the other one was opposed to it. Hakim Saheb found it to be a conspiracy hatched by the British who, perhaps, wanted to establish Khilafat in a country under their complete control. But Ibn-e-Saud frustrated the British plan by declining recognition to Egypt as centre of Khilafat.

On reaching Marseilles on 22nd April Hakim Saheb addressed the following letter in Urdu to Mahatma Gandhi :

“We left Bombay (on) 18th April and we have reached Marseilles today, 22nd April. My health was somewhat better on the way. I was sorry not to have been able to meet you before I sailed. God willing, I shall give myself the pleasure on my return. I shall feel deeply ashamed when anyone asks me about the condition of India. For what shall I be able to say except that it is wretched,—that its two great but unfortunate communities are fighting to their hearts’ content among themselves. How I wish that those who are engaged in widening the gulf would have pity on India, on Asia, indeed, on their own respective communities, and would turn their faces towards the true path and would put life into the lifeless Congress. Dr Ansari is well

and seems to have benefitted by the change.”²

Mahatma Gandhi was much impressed by the feelings that Hakim Saheb had expressed in the letter and remarked, “those who know the good soul will readily appreciate and share great grief over our dissensions.”³

On 23rd April Hakim Saheb and Dr Ansari reached Paris. Hakim Saheb stayed here for a month where he remained under the treatment of a physician. However, Dr Ansari left for London and persuaded Hakim Saheb also to accompany him but he politely declined. He himself wanted to visit England as he was being repeatedly invited by his old friends such as Father Thomas and Lord Hardinge. He offered the Eid prayers at the Afghanistan Embassy where the Indians and Afghans had assembled in a considerable number. Here he met the revolutionary leader Maulvi Barkatullah Bhopali also who was then in exile in Paris and had acted as the Prime Minister of the Indian Government in exile at Kabul in 1915 under the presidency of Raja Mahendra Pratap. He spent most of his time in visiting the National Library of Paris, modern mosques and other academic and literacy centres in France. He also met a number of people in Paris. Hasan Shahid Suhrawardy, Barkatullah Bhopali, Madam Cama, Mrs Roy, Gen. Nadir Khan, who later became the King of Afghanistan, Sardar Aziz Khan, Dr Nihadar Shah, Ismail Pasha, Sharif Pasha, Mustafa Rustam Buck, Ahmed Owni Buck, Dr Bohjat Wahby, Aakif Kamal Buck, Zia Rasheed Buck and several others met Hakim Saheb in Paris and spent most of their time with him in exchanging views on various subjects. Maulvi Sadrudin came to see him from Berlin, Indian students from Germany and London also called on him in Paris. The Maharajas of Baroda and Mysore who had been very friendly with Hakim

2. *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XXVII, p. 162.

3. *ibid.*

Saheb were also his constant companions.

After staying for a month in Paris, Hakim Saheb reached Lausanne on 24 May, 1925. During his one and a half months stay in Switzerland, he visited all its beautiful places and got himself medically treated. The climate of Switzerland created a very healthy effect upon him. There he developed friendship with a few persons and tried to learn the Turkish language from his friend Fuad Saleem Buck Hejazi with whom he talked for hours in Arabic. It was here that he received the shocking news of the death of C.R. Das on 16th June. Das had been his close friend and political associate and the co-founder of the Swaraj Party and in whose absence he had presided over the Ahmedabad session of the Indian National Congress in 1921.

In a letter addressed to Mahatma Gandhi, Hakim Ajmal Khan expressed his feelings of sorrow and anguish. He wrote thus :

“Although all of us are to depart from the world one day but his (Das’s) death is a great and irreparable loss for the simple reason that there is a dearth in this world of such virtuous and able persons who can sacrifice their life and property at the altar of motherland. We hope that the country will never forget the sacrifices that C.R. Das made for the sake of his motherland and will surely succeed in winning that *Swaraj* for the achievement of which he did not hesitate even to lay his valuable life. He possessed many qualities but the most salient of them was that he treated all the communities equally and never made any discrimination. In fact he left the narrow by-lanes and treaded the broad high way which, I pray to the Almighty God, may be followed by all the people of India.”⁴

4. Qazi Mohd. Abdul Ghaffar, *op. cit.*, p. 360.

From Switzerland he went to Vienna to see an exhibition on medical science. Here he met Barkat Ali, Khwaja Abdul Hamied, Abid Husain and Muhammed Mujeeb who had come to see him from different parts of Europe in order to request him not to close down the Jamia Millia Islamia until their arrival in India as they had decided to dedicate their lives to the cause of this institution. In fact, they had been directed by Zakir Husain from Germany who had already expressed his desire to serve the Jamia on returning India. These Indian youths discussed a blue print of coming shape of Jamia.

While in Switzerland, Hakim Saheb planned to visit Turkey and study the situation there. But he was informed that he could visit Istanbul but not Ankara and so he gave up the idea of visiting the ancient seat of Khilafat for the preservation of which he had fought a long-drawn battle against the British. However, they parted ways at Venice from where Dr Ansari went to Istanbul.

On way back home Hakim Saheb stayed in Cairo for a week but was shocked to listen to the discussion among the Ulama of *Al-Azhar* who, like their Indian counterparts were divided on the issue of the Khilafat. Throughout his stay in Egypt he remained busy meeting the Egyptian leaders and the Indians settled in Cairo. Replying to the reception accorded to him by the *Anjuman-e-Rabita-e-Hindiya* Hakim Saheb said :

“Unfortunately India has fallen from that height where she had reached after making great efforts for three or four years. But we should in no way lose heart. Other nations have also passed through such stages... Let us hope that in the event of our death the coming generations would fulfil our mission. We must have the faith that we would succeed in achieving freedom for our country... one should act on the principle that whatever is said should be translated into practice... If you heartily wish to strengthen

India, then you should act for this.”⁵

Since the audience consisted mostly of the Indians, Hakim Saheb continued :

“In fact your progress depends upon the Hindu-Muslim unity. Hindus and Muslims in India are passing through very bad times. The damage that had been done by the differences between the Hindus and Muslims is of magnitude that has not been witnessed for the past twenty-five or thirty years. If we had had no intention of seeing India free we would quietened ourselves. So we should not lose heart . . . I feel ashamed to say that not only the commoners among the Hindus and Muslims are fighting against each other out of ignorance but even the educated ones are also helping in perpetuating this disunity. However, the time is not far when they would realise their error and come to know that they had acted not for the benefit of the country but against its interests.”⁶

He advised the Indian settlers in Egypt to remain united and never fall a prey to disunity.

The anguish in his heart thus expressed itself in Cairo when he found himself in the midst of his own countrymen. From Cairo he reached Palestine at the end of July. He was much shocked to see the miserable condition of the people belonging to the Druze tribe, who were vigorously and bravely fighting against the French. The railway station of Arza had been virtually converted into a French cantonment. During his stay in Palestine Hakim Saheb exchanged views with the local leaders. He visited Syria and Lebanon also and had several meetings with the leaders of these places during the course of which he talked to them on the problems of Islamic countries.

5. *ibid.*, pp. 354-5.

6. *ibid.*, pp. 355-6.

Hakim Saheb stayed in these countries till 9 September, 1925. Then he returned to Egypt where, having stayed for a week, he reached Bombay on 25th September, after a long tour spanning a period of five and a half months. Yet his heart continued to languish for want of communal harmony.

XII

Back Home

SOON AFTER touching the Indian shores at Bombay Hakim Ajmal Khan came to know of the communal riots that had broken out in Delhi and Aligarh. Immediately he sent the following message to his countrymen through the *Bombay Chronicle* :

“I had hoped that by the time I return from abroad the communal differences would be lessened to a greater extent. But I was sorry to know that the strifes have all the more increased between the Hindus and the Muslims. Even then I have not lost hope and I am confident that my country would see better days soon. The present differences, in fact, have come out as a reaction to the communal unity and I hope that these dissensions will gradually come to an end. I see a better day not only for India but for the entire Asia although I cannot say with certainty as to when it will be.”¹

Giving his impressions what foreigners thought about the Indian people, Hakim Saheb said:

“All the Islamic nations like Syria, Palestine, Egypt etc. are unable to comprehend our smaller feuds. They fail to understand as to how the cow-slaughter or music before the mosque and similar other things could become a ground for mutual differences and disunity among the people. However, all of them have requested the Indian

1. Qazi Mohd. Abdul Ghaffar, *Hayat-i-Ajmal*, Aligarh, 1950, pp. 371-2.

Muslims to act with generosity of heart.”²

In another statement issued to the *Daily Khilafat* he said:

“Today it was required that India should have held the banner for the liberation of Asia but how disgraceful it is that not only the Muslims are fighting against the Muslims but even the Hindus are at war with the Hindus...”³

Similarly, narrating the experiences of the West Asian countries at the Jama Masjid in Delhi, he stated:

“...at all these places I met the people, talked to them, expressed to them my thoughts and listened to their views and from all this came to the conclusion that there has begun a new movement in the whole Islamic world. There is a strong hope that one day Asia would be liberated from the clutches of Europe and all its countries will achieve freedom one by one. But it can't be predicted as to how long would it take. All this depends upon your endeavours, time, and above all, the grace and benevolence of God, the Almighty.”⁴

In November 1925 Hakim Saheb was busy in mobilising funds for the orphans of the Syrian martyrs who lost their lives at the hands of the French. He made an appeal to the Muslims of India to offer prayers for the martyrs of Damascus and to condemn the oppressive measures taken by the French on innocent people of Syria. He sent a telegram to the League of Nations also in which he called upon it to pay immediate attention to the problem and suggested that the only way out to bring this suppression to an end was to scrap the French mandate over Syria. He sent similar telegrams to Ghazi Mustafa Kamal of Turkey, Sultan Fuad of Egypt, Amir Amanullah of

2. *ibid.*

3. *ibid.*, p. 373.

4. *ibid.*, pp. 373-4.

Afghanistan, Reza Shah of Iran and Ibn-e-Saud of Hejaz also. He requested the influential personalities of Egypt to organise the parties collectively so as to awaken their country. In his view the unity of the Islamic world and the Indians was the only method of bringing an oppressive government to an end.

While doing all this for the West Asian people, Hakim Saheb also tried to mobilise public opinion for them through the Indian National Congress. Alongwith Dr. M.A. Ansari, he thus addressed a letter to the Congress president Mahatma Gandhi and narrated to him the hardships of the Druses who inhabited the southern part of Syria and suffered at the hands of its mandatory power. Following was the text of the letter:

“Recent events in Southern Syria, the country where the Druses live, and where an armed resistance is being carried on by these oppressed people against the French, the Mandatory Power, have brought to light the frightfulness of the French authorities there. A cable, received two days back from Palestine sent by Syed Jamaluddin-al-Husaini, Secretary of *Lajnatut-Tanfiziyyah*, the most popular and influential organization of the people of Palestine, says that the town of Damascus has terribly suffered from the French bombardment and the death-roll has been tremendous. Although from the various accounts published in the British Press one could gather that things were bad in Syria, yet this telegram from Palestine and Reuter’s cable from Cairo, received subsequently, show the utter barbarity and inhumanity which is being practised by the French on the population in the Druse country and Damascus. “Apart from the recent instances of frightfulness, our tour in Syria brought under our observation many facts which proved the callousness of the French and their utter disregard for the elementary rights of the people of the mandated territory in Syria.

“We have already published our experiences in the Indian Press, but in order to save you from the trouble of reading the Urdu reports, published in the *Hamdard*, we would briefly give you some of the most salient facts regarding the situation in Syria.

“When the League of Nations gave the mandate of Syria to France, the French Government and the High Commissioner made a public declaration to the people of Syria of granting them complete autonomy regarding their internal affairs. Syria was to be divided in several autonomous provinces each with a governor, elected by the people and an advisory council representing the people and elected by them. Whilst this promise was partially and outwardly carried out in the provinces of Lebanon and Damascus, the province of Hauran, the country of the Druses, was neither given autonomy nor a Council with President elected by them, but a French officer Captain Carbiollet, was forced on the Druses, against their wish and when they made demonstrations and representations against this, their deputation was insulted, their notables were publicly thrashed and imprisoned, and their women folk were maltreated.

“Captain Carbiollet, who had come from French Congo, practised all the atrocities to which the poor inhabitants of the French Congo had been subjected by the French, but the Druses being an ancient, proud, warlike race resisted these methods and were forced to take up arms. They inflicted considerable losses on the French forces and have so far resisted the French invasion of their country successfully, but the methods practised by the French in the adjoining parts of Syria, viz., Damascus and Aleppo, are causing the spread of revolt to these parts. The telegrams quoted above refer to the most recent atrocities committed on the people of Damascus,

"The French Government are also practising unfair and dishonest methods and are depleting the country of its wealth by removing all the gold in the country and replacing it by paper money. They are gradually undermining all the economic resources of the country which is resulting in destitution and poverty. To add to this depletion, they have also been collecting gold from the people of towns and villages in the shape of fines and punishments.

"We are writing this to you in order to elicit your sympathy for these Asiatic brethren, and to request you, as the President of the Congress, to send a cable to the League of Nations which has granted this mandate to France, and to instruct other Congress Organisations to do the same. We are conscious that the present situation in India is not very favourable to such an action, but it is our considered opinion as Indians, as Muslims and as Asiatics that we should sympathize with all the oppressed Asiatic people and cultivate friendly relations with them which would be beneficial to us and to them."⁵

On receiving this letter from Hakim Ajmal Khan and Dr. M.A. Ansari, Mahatma Gandhi replied as follows:

"...What is the use of the Congress President sending a cable to the League of Nations? I feel like a caged lion, only with this difference that the lion foams and frets and gnashes his teeth and lashes the iron bars furiously in the vain attempt to be free, whereas I recognize my limitations and refuse to foam and fret. If we had any power behind us, I would immediately send the cable suggested by you."⁶

Similarly referring to the letter, Mahatma Gandhi made the following comment in the columns of the *Young India*:

5. *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XXVIII, pp. 439-40.

6. *ibid.*, pp. 437-8.

"...What is the League of Nations? Is it not in reality merely England and France? Do the other powers count? Is it any use appealing to France which is denying her motto of Fraternity, Equality and Justice? She has denied justice to Germany, there is little fraternity between her and the Riffs, and the doctrine of equality she is trampling underfoot in Syria. If we would appeal to England, we need not go to the League of Nations. She is much nearer home. She is perched on the heights of Simla except when she descends to Delhi for a brief period. But to appeal to her is to appeal to Caesar against Augustus.

"Let us then perceive the truth in its nakedness and learn to appeal to the nation to do her duty. Relief of Syria lies through India. And if we cannot appreciate our greatness, let us confess our littleness and say nothing. But we need not be little. Let us do at least one thing thoroughly—either fight to the bitter end, even as our brothers the four-footed animals often do, or, as men, let us learn and teach through co-operation on the largest scale known to the world the uselessness, nay, the sinfulness of exploitation of those weaker than ourselves. That co-operation among millions is possible only through the spinning wheel."⁷

However, Hakim Ajmal Khan continued his efforts by mobilising public opinion in favour of the innocent victims of Damascus and collecting funds for them. For this purpose he formed a Central Committee which had members from all shades of public life. Hakim Saheb and Dr. Ansari became secretaries of the Committee and Zulfiqar Ali Khan was elected its president.

Side by side Hakim Saheb continued his efforts to re-establish Hindu-Muslim unity in India and left no opportunity to

7. *ibid.*, p. 441.

preach the ideal of communal harmony. Speaking to a large gathering at Lahore in March 1926 he said thus:

“If all of you make a true and determined effort to achieve *Swaraj* for the country how could you fail? But how could you succeed in winning the *Swaraj* when both the brothers, the Hindus and the Muslims, are engaged in fighting against each other. Punjab has been well-known for wars. Eminent wrestlers have also emerged from this province only. No doubt the physical strength is exhibited in this province, forgive me to say, that the national strength is unfortunately not being exhibited in the same manner... please think it over for a while that no other thing has damaged the Congress so much as our mutual conflicts. Although it is true that the Government is against our liberation movement and that it possesses supreme power but do you think that the power of the Government has caused that much harm as it has been done by mutual wranglings?... I fail to understand as to what benefits have these two communities secured by fighting each other. What, if one community overcomes the other. What benefit did it get by causing loss to the other? What is needed now is to act together in a way which may benefit both the communities equally and that common goal is nothing but getting the *Swaraj*.”⁸

The people listened to him patiently and pledged not to allow their province affected by the poison of communalism. But then came the news that Kanpur was in the grip of communal riots on the eve of Holi and thereafter Calcutta followed suit on the issue of playing music before the mosque. Finding the situation beyond control the Khilafat Committee convened its special meeting in May 1926. Addressing it Hakim Saheb reiterated the need for communal harmony without

8. Qazi Mohd. Abdul Ghaffar, *op. cit.*, pp. 397-8.

which the achievement of *Swaraj* was just an impossibility. In fact, the Indians had forgotten the high ideal of unity. He continued:

“...I am the supporter of Hindu-Muslim unity today as I was ever before. If we are giving up the unity we are committing a sin for which there is no penance...”⁹

During the course of his speech he criticised the activities of the Hindu Mahasabha also which provoked communal sentiments of the Hindus.

Hakim Saheb was severely criticised for this speech in some quarters who dubbed him as a communalist. Commenting upon his views the *Pratap* wrote in its editorial columns:

“...Mahatma Gandhi had appointed Hakim Ajmal Khan as his successor. He was asked to guide 200 million Hindus when the former decided to wage a non-violent war against the Government in 1921. The Hakim Ajmal Khan whom the Hindus of Delhi once respected more than the Muslims, that man is dead today.”¹⁰

However Hakim Saheb maintained silence. He did not want to involve himself in any meaningless controversy. He continued his efforts, in whatever manner he could, to forge unity between the Hindus and the Muslims. But he was now almost a broken man. He was fed up with communal politics let loose by the communal organisations. He, therefore, in agreement with Dr. Ansari, decided to dissociate himself with all the organisations that shared communal ideologies. Finally he associated himself in July 1926 with the Indian National Union a non-communal organisation, which had been formed by Motilal Nehru and Maulana Azad in order to iron out differences be-

9. *ibid.*, p. 401.

10. *ibid.*, pp. 406-7.

tween the two communities. According to its manifesto the organisation decided to "start a movement to rally to a centre and organise those sections of enlightened Indians" who agreed that communalism was a negation of nationalism and that continued communal conflicts were inevitably destined to lead to "utter political, economic and social ruin."¹¹ It aimed at completely eliminating communal conflict from national life, preceded by suitable steps to organise the "civic life in such a way as to make violent communal outbursts difficult, if not impossible and to establish points of contact between the communities to prepare a way for the adjustment of mutual differences." The Union manifesto further declared:

"...It is time that we should make a determined effort to rally and organise these sections, and, in this way, isolate, weaken and discredit these mischievous elements in our society which are really responsible for the present crisis. A movement of this nature can be effectively carried on only by a highly organized body of men of all communities who are themselves absolutely free from communal bias of any kind, and are united together by a common bond of fellowship in their struggle against communalism."¹²

The immediate object of the Indian National Union was to avoid communal conflicts in their existing form whereas the ultimate aim was to bring about a thorough understanding between the different communities on a solid and permanent basis." The founders of the new organisation were of the view that the old idea of establishing mixed Boards for the settlement of the mutual disputes was never given a fair trial and, therefore, it was time that serious efforts were made to try this experiment on an extensive basis. They aimed gradually at developing *Panchayats* "to act equitably in the discharge of their duties...and

11. *The Indian Annual Register*, 1926, Vol. II, pp. 91-2.

12. *ibid.*

to take the principles incorporated in the resolutions of the Unity Conference at Delhi as a basis.”¹³

Hakim Ajmal Khan was the first amongst those leaders who extended their whole-hearted co-operation to the Union which aimed at promoting and fostering the growth of a united Indian nation by removing all causes of inter-communal discord and separatist tendencies. The Union was received with mixed feelings. Some Hindu leaders criticised it for not consulting Madan Mohan Malaviya who was a true representative of their community. They criticised Hakim Ajmal Khan for sponsoring the organisation after he had made “a bigoted communal speech as Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Khilafat Conference of Delhi.” On the other hand, some Muslims called it “the latest fraud”.¹⁴ But as usual Hakim Saheb quietly digested the criticism and continued to extend his co-operation to the Union which included such luminaries as Motilal Nehru, V. S. Srinivas Sastri, T. B. Sapro, Sarojini Naidu, Sir Zulfiqar Ali Khan, P. C. Ray, Dr. Ansari, J. M. Sen Gupta, T. A. K. Sherwani, S. Srinivas Iyengar, Chaudhry Khaliquz Zaman, Lala Dunichand, Dr. S. Mohammed and Maharaja of Mahmudabad. The Indian National Union met for a number of times in Delhi and also at Mussourie but ultimately it also ended without cutting much ice.

In spite of the best efforts made by the national leaders the atmosphere remained tense with communal feelings. Ultimately it resulted in the assassination of Swami Shraddhananda by one Qazi Rasheed on 23 December, 1926 which shocked Hakim Ajmal Khan. Although he had developed some differences with Swamiji in the last days, Ajmal Khan always respected him as a brother. Both of them had worked hard during the anti-Rowlatt agitation days and had presented an exemplary instance

13. *ibid.*, p. 92.

14. *ibid.*, pp. 94-5.

of friendship. Ajmal Khan, therefore, condemned the act of assassination of Swamiji and felt frustrated over the communal frenzy that had shaken faith of even the most sensible sections of the country. It was under these circumstances that the annual session of the Indian National Congress was held at Guwahati under Srinivas Iyengar but Hakim Saheb did not attend it. He simply sent a brief message to the organisers of the session. The message ran thus:

“If the Congress considering it an important object did not find a way out for the Hindu-Muslim unity, then let me tell you that your entire programme, however good it may be, would prove useless.”¹⁵

It was the last message that Hakim Saheb gave to the Congress in his life-time. In fact, the communal disunity had left him a frustrated man who had lost all hopes for the future. [Now he concentrated all his energies on the development of Jamia Millia Islamia which demanded his urgent attention.

Ajmal Khan then undertook a tour of Bihar in January 1927 for collecting funds for the Jamia. During this tour he was accompanied by its Vice-Chancellor Dr Zakir Husain. Spending several days and nights in Bihar in the fulfilment of his mission, he was successful in mobilising considerable funds for the Jamia. But he was distressed to find the country, as usual, in the grip of communal outbursts. Later it became a routine for the riots to break out almost every week. In June 1927, therefore, at the initiative of Dr. Ansari the representative leaders of both the communities assembled at Sharif Manzil, the residence of Hakim Saheb, to consider the issues concerning the Hindus and the Muslims. This meeting resulted in the formation of a Unity Board under the chairmanship of

15. Qazi Mohd. Abdul Ghaffar, *op. cit.*, p. 420.

Hakim Ajmal Khan. After a long spell of silence, he addressed a public meeting thus:

“I have been ailing for the last two years. Due to my illness I was not able to address any public assemblage. But I consider it to be my duty to make an effort for the Hindu-Muslim unity. The Hindu-Muslim feuds have been before our eyes for the last three and a half years. I, therefore, request you to consider with a cool mind as to what advantage did you derive out of these quarrels. Did the Hindus get any satisfaction from these conflicts that they have won the claim of playing music before the mosques? Or the Muslims have secured the authority of stopping the Hindus from playing the music before the mosques? I don't think the Hindus and Muslims have been successful in obtaining these rights. Thus the issue of playing music before the mosques could not be solved even after a lapse of three and a half years' fighting. Same is the case with cow-slaughter. Political differences also exist as usual. But now the time has arrived when after the experience of three and a half years we should consider these matters with the coolness of mind as to what way should be adopted now when we have gained nothing out of these conflicts.”¹⁶

These efforts averted for the time being a communal riot which was going to break out in Delhi on the eve of *Eid-ul Adha*. But the general condition of the country did not improve to the full satisfaction of Hakim Saheb. Twice he visited Simla in September that year to attend a Unity Conference with M.A. Jinnah as Chairman for a compromise between the Hindus and the Muslims. But the deliberations of the Conference did not yield any fruitful result except that a committee was ultimately formed to identify the major issues for considera-

16. *ibid.*, pp. 432-3.

tion with Motilal Nehru, Dr. Moonje, Jairamdas Daulat Ram, Ram Kedarnath, Principal Diwan Chand, Sardar Sardul Singh Caveeshar, Dr. M.A. Ansari, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Maulana Mohammad Ali, Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew and Hakim Ajmal Khan. In the words of Mohammad Ali "apparently the Conference assembled at the Assembly Hall but actually its entire deliberations used to take place in the Cecil Hotel room of Simla where Hakim Saheb was staying. He worked tirelessly throughout the day and night for the success of the Conference. Somehow we managed to get some time but for Hakim Saheb that too was impossible"¹⁷ The talks, however, failed and the dejected messiah hardly made his appearance in the public again.

17. *Hamdard*, Delhi, 6 January, 1928.

XIII

The Epilogue

THE LAST days of Hakim Ajmal Khan's life were spent in a pall of gloom. Although he was satisfied with the future of the Tibbia College, he was no less concerned about the Jamia Millia since it was passing through a precarious period for want of funds. He often said that, if he lived a few years more, he would make it as strong as the Tibbia College. Then there was failure of his mission in forging a lasting Hindu-Muslim unity which gave him a severe set-back. Recrudescence of communal riots had left him a broken man. The Hindus and the Muslims were fighting over trivial issues which were insignificant in social or religious life. Prior to 1924, whenever Hakim Saheb undertook a peace mission or endeavoured for communal harmony he invariably succeeded but ever since the riot broke out in Multan, his life seemed to have lost its fervour for him. He was all the more sorry in the last days because of the fact that in spite of his best efforts to eradicate communalism from the country, he himself came to be dubbed as a communalist by a section of Indian society. Yet, with all his disappointments, he went ahead with his efforts to remove the miasma of misunderstandings which prevailed between the Hindus and the Muslims.

King Amanullah Khan of Afghanistan was scheduled to visit Bombay in mid-December 1927. Hakim Saheb decided to call on him despite his illness. He was persuaded not to proceed to Bombay but he would not change his mind. In fact, he wanted to talk to the King personally and present to him an address

on behalf of the Jamia Millia. Ultimately he reached Bombay with great difficulty and had a close and prolonged session with the King on 14 December, 1927. On the 16th he read out an address while Maulana Mohammad Ali presented the King with a casket and Dr. Zakir Husain presented to him a set of the publications of the Jamia. Following is the text of the Address which Hakim Saheb read out in chaste persian:

“Your Majesty, Afghanistan today, due to your solicitude has become an important centre of Islam in the world and is making rapid strides on the road to progress. Although your Majesty is the great reformer of Afghanistan, yet the effect of your Majesty’s efforts are by no means confined to your country alone. We see their influence permeating the entire Islamic world. We may even assert that civilising process of the Afghans is a great service of which humanity may well be proud. We are aware of the great endeavours your Majesty has made in the spread of knowledge which is the basis of all progress and it is for this that we beg to place before your Majesty some information about the Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi, established by the Muslims of India with a view to promote nationalism and also to enlarge their mental horizon. It is seven years now when the Jamia was founded with a view to putting the people on the right path in matters of education which could lead them to their destined goal. . .

“It is not unknown to your Majesty that the great need of the Mussalmans in the present age is to acquire knowledge in both secular and religious subjects. So far the system of education prevalent in the country has prepared our young men for nothing but government service and consequently the scope of their social activities has become very limited. The Jamia, therefore, has placed before it the ideal of plain living and high thinking and that of inducing our young men to adopt other vocations. Realising

further that acquisition of knowledge through the medium of foreign language involves a great loss of mental energy, the Jamia has adopted Urdu as its medium of instruction . . . ”¹

Thus for Jamia's sake Hakim Saheb had undertaken a strenuous journey from Delhi to Bombay. In fact Jamia was the only sustaining hope in his last days. It was but a sapling which he himself had planted in 1920 that had now grown into a big tree. His address created a deep impact on King Amanullah. Replying to his points the King said that he was much impressed by the account given by Hakim Ajmal Khan of the activities of the University. He said that the education imparted in the University was on the right lines and he thoroughly approved of it. In his opinion, it was the right kind of education that was being imparted to young Muslims in Jamia as it groomed them for national work as well as for the service of Islam. Concluding his speech the King said that he was proceeding to Europe to promote in the cause of his country and that of Islam and he felt sure that he had the sympathy of his co-religionists in the success of his mission.

The King extended to Hakim Saheb an invitation to visit Afghanistan which he gladly accepted. In fact he was very happy to have introduced the Jamia to the King. After spending a few days in Bombay Hakim Saheb visited Palanpur to mobilise funds for the Jamia and ultimately reached Delhi on 26th December. After a brief stop-over in Delhi, he again proceeded to Rampur the same night. This was his last journey that he undertook in life during which Khwaja Abdul Majeed also accompanied him. He was seen off at the Delhi station by some of his friends. Just before leaving for Rampur, he told the Editor *Al-Aman*, Maulana Mazharuddin, to inform him as

1. *The Times of India*, 17 December, 1927.

to when would Lord Headley be visiting Rampur after his Delhi's visit a few days later.

Hakim Saheb had already been subjected to bouts of colic pain some time back. A few months before his visit to Bombay he suffered from another attack of Anjina Pectoria—the first attack having already taken place a few days earlier than his tour to Iraq in 1904. He suffered from it in Bombay too. On 27th and 28th December he remained busy and played billiard and cards with the Nawab of Rampur. But he did not feel like taking his dinner on the night of the 28th. Around ten in the night he restlessly paced across his room. When the Nawab sent for him an hour later, he was still uncomfortable. On hearing this the Nawab came to his room. Then, the two remained engaged in conversation till 2 A.M. Thereafter the Nawab withdrew but Hakim Saheb felt miserable. He asked for little warm water but it could not be served to him in time. Some time later he breathed his last and thus ended a noble and an eventful life, completely dedicated to the service of the nation.

The news of Hakim Ajmal Khan's death spread like wild fire. People in large numbers thronged to Sharif Manzil in the Ballimaran street of Delhi which had remained the hub of his political and medical activities. With tears in their eyes, they came there to pay the last homage to their *messiah*,—one who had ever been striving to create Hindu-muslim harmony.

The mortal remains of Hakim Saheb reached Delhi from Rampur in the afternoon of 29 December, 1927. The funeral procession started from his residence, Sharif Manzil, where he had seen the light of the day sixty years ago. The procession passed through Chandni Chowk, which had witnessed his memorable role in the anti-Rowlatt agitation. It reached Jamia Masjid where the funeral prayer was held and where he had addressed his countrymen on a number of occasions. His body

was finally laid to rest in his family cemetery, in the compound of the Dargah of Syed Hasan Rasul Numa on Panchkuiya Road in New Delhi.

The sudden passing away of Hakim Ajmal Khan cast a deep gloom over the country. His exit shocked the Indian National Congress which was then meeting in Madras under the presidentship of Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed Ansari who is reported to have burst into tears when the news was conveyed to him. In a sentimental interview given to the press Dr. Ansari said:

“...I am crushed under the weight of this great national calamity and irreparable personal loss. One of India's greatest sons is now no more. No more shall his firm determination put heart in the waverers. No more shall his wise counsel keep in the check the impatience of the people. No more shall he lead us in our fight for freedom... But his memory will live and his work for the country shall yet bear fruit. The Tibbia College and the Jamia Millia Islamia at Delhi will remain as monuments of his constructive genius. The Tibbia College is fortunately on a sound financial footing. Not so, however, is the Jamia Millia, Hakim Saheb's dearest child. As ever, Hakim Ajmal Khan spent his last days in seeking succour for it. His long cherished wish was to see the Jamia standing on a firmer financial footing. But alas! it was not to be.”²

Equally shocked was Mahatma Gandhi. In an interview given to the *Indian Daily Mail* on 30 December, 1927, he said:

“It is a great and grievous loss at this juncture. Hakim Ajmal Khan was one of the truest servants of India and for the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity he was one of the

2. *ibid.*, 30 December, 1927.

most invaluable men. I can but hope that what we did not do and learn during his life time we shall now learn after and by his death. If the accounts that have been published, viz. that Hindus took part in paying respect to the memory of the deceased in just as large numbers as the Mussalmans, are true, it is a very healthy sign and I hope that the spirit of brotherhood and friendliness that has been evoked in Delhi by his death will continue and become permanent and permeate throughout the length and breadth of the land. For me the death of Hakimji is a deep personal loss."

In a cable from Monte Carlo Motilal Nehru sent a condolence message to Dr. Ansari. It said:

"Deeply grieved at the sad news of Hakim Ajmal Khan's death. India has lost a most devoted son whose place it is impossible to fill. He lived and died for Hindu-Muslim unity. Both the communities owe him a deep debt of gratitude for his unselfish sacrifices, by immediate steps to sink all differences and present a unified front..."

Similarly in her condolence message Sarojini Naidu said that Hakim Ajmal Khan "loved his country and worked for her freedom. They were mourning the loss of a patriot and the only memorial they would raise to him was to sink all their differences and prejudices." Sir Dinshaw Petit paid homage to "a selfless worker, a great patriot and a great Indian." Paying his tributes to Hakim Saheb Jamna Das Mehta said: "the man was greater than his career and the love which he bore towards all communities would remain a landmark in history." Sir Abdullah Haroon thought that "India not only lost a great physician but a patriot of the first order...an apostle of Hindu-Muslim unity." In a telegraphic message the Nawab of Rampur said: "The untimely death of this selfless leader and benefactor of India is an irreparable loss to the whole country." In the words

of Jawaharlal Nehru, "...as an ex-president of the Congress he was something more also, and he occupied a unique place in the Congress leadership... He brought the Hindus and Muslims much nearer to each other, for both honoured him and were influenced by his example."

But the greatest tribute was paid to Hakim Saheb in a long obituary in the columns of the *Young India* entitled, *In Memoriam*. It stated thus:

"In the death of Hakim Saheb Ajmal Khan the country has lost one of its truest servants. Hakim Saheb's was a many-sided personality. He was not merely an able physician who practised his art as much for the rich as for the poor... Though he passed his time among potentates, he was a thorough-going democrat. He was a great Mussalman and an equally great Indian. He loved equally Hindus and Mussalmans and was in turn equally respected and loved by both. Hindu-Muslim unity was the breath of his nostrils. His later days were soured because of our dissensions. But he never lost faith in his country or his people. He felt that both the communities were bound in the end to unite. Having that unchangeable faith, he never ceased work for unity. Though he took time, he finally threw in his lot with the non-cooperators and did not hesitate to put in peril his fondest and greatest creation, the Tibbia College. He loved this College with a passion which only those who knew him well could realize. In Hakimji I have lost not merely a wise and steadfast co-worker, I have lost also a friend on whom I could rely in the hour of need. He was my constant guide in the matter of Hindu-Muslim unity. His judgement, sobriety and knowledge and human nature enabled him for the most part to give correct decisions. Such a man never dies. Though he is no longer in the flesh with us, his

spirit shall be ever with us and calls us even now to a faithful discharge of our duty. And no memorial that we can raise to perpetuate his memory can be complete until we have achieved real Hindu-Muslim unity. May God grant that we may learn to do through his death what we failed to do in his life time!

“But Hakimji was no idle dreamer. He believed in realizing his dream. As he realized his dream about medicine through the Tibbia College, so he sought partially to realize his political dream through the Jamia Millia. When this national university was almost on the point of dying he, almost single-handed, carried out a plan of removing the institution from Aligarh to Delhi. But the removal meant more worry for him. He believed himself hence (came) forward to be specially responsible for the financial stability of the College. He was the principal man to find support for it either from his own pocket or by way of contributions collected from personal friends.”³

Such was Hakim Ajmal Khan, a giant among men of his times. Strong-willed, affable, patriotic, secular, he was a magnanimous soul whose ideals are worthy of emulation even today. His life was a saga of dedicated public service, open to all ‘to point a moral or adorn a tale.’

3. *The Young India*, 5 January, 1928.

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